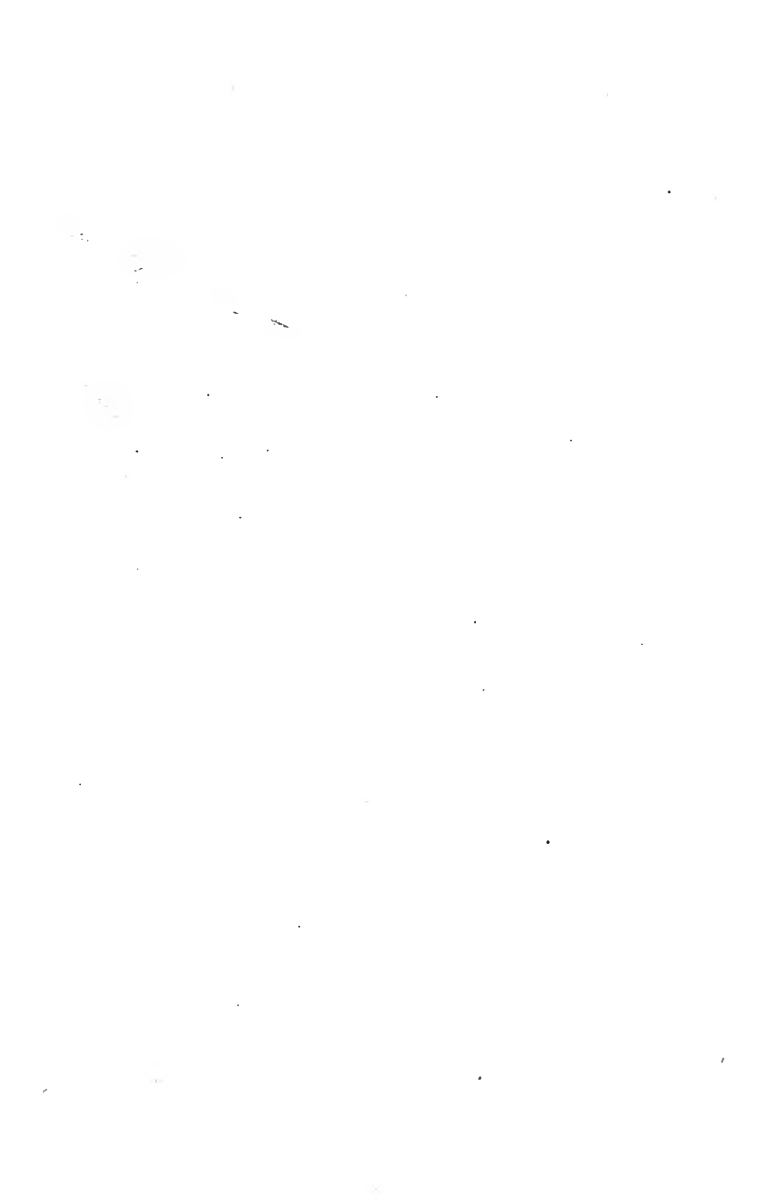




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A MAN IN EARNEST:

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LIFE

OF

A. H. CONANT.

BY

ROBERT COLLYER.

BOSTON:

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To

GEORGE W. HOSMER,

PRESIDENT OF ANTIOCH COLLEGE,

DEAR FRIEND ALIKE OF THE SUBJECT AND THE WRITER,

This Morsel of Biography

IS DEDICATED.



P R E F A C E .

WHEN what was mortal of Mr. Conant had been laid away, many friends and lovers asked me to write a brief sketch of his life ; and my own love for him prompted me to try and meet their wishes. That the work was not sooner finished, I trust will be pardoned on account of my many cares. That it is not better done, must be my own fault, or foolishness.

R. C.

May 26, 1868.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. FOREELDERS	9
II. GENESIS AND EXODUS	26
III. FRONTIER FARMER	40
IV. STUDENT	60
V. SECULAR BUT SACRED	85
VI. MISSIONARY	100
VII. PREACHER AND PASTOR	111
VIII. TRANSPLANTED AND WHAT THEN ?	137
IX. FROM ROCKFORD TO HIS REST	147
X. WHAT WAS SAID AT THE GRAVE-SIDE	211

A MAN IN EARNEST.

I.

FOREELDERS.

IN a curious little manuscript volume inscribed "Ebenezer Conant, his book, Ashburnham, Jan. 15, 1782," there is this introductory note: "This book was made by my dear father, Ebenezer Conant, who died on the 3d of August, 1783," and then these words about the Conant family: "I, John Conant, was born in Ashburnham, Mass., Feb. 2, 1773. My father's name was Ebenezer Conant; he was born in Concord, Mass., Aug. 12, 1743. His father's name was also Ebenezer Conant, and he was born in Beverly, Mass., Dec. 1, 1700. His father's name was Roger Conant, who came to America with a colony, about 1623, and settled near to Marblehead or Salem, and I have understood that he was the son of a man who lived in France when the per-

secution raged there against the Huguenots ; was a Huguenot himself, and fled with one of his brothers, of whom altogether there were seven, to England, there to enjoy their religion in freedom and peace. My mother's name was Lydia Oakes ; she was born in Stowe, Mass., on the 6th of June, 1743, and my father and mother had seven children ; namely, Lydia, born Nov. 21, 1768 ; Sarah, born Oct. 17, 1770 ; John (meaning myself), born Feb. 2, 1773 ; Nelsy, born March 15, 1775 ; Ebbie, born June 6th, 1777 (on my mother's own birthday) ; Calvin, born May 30, 1779, and Luther, born June 24, 1782."

It is the Eben born on his mother's birthday, ninety years ago, who is still, 1868, a hale and hearty man, living in Geneva, Kane County, Illinois, who is the father of Augustus Hammond Conant, the subject of this memoir. The manuscript from which I have made these extracts seems to have been written jointly by Ebenezer and John Conant, each contributing about one hundred pages of such matter as was to him of vital moment. The contributions of the father are theological, those of the son autobiographical, and are altogether of very little interest,

except as they can throw a ray of light into the lives of these Conants of eighty and a hundred years ago, that may aid us to see better the Conant who came from their loins. The theological works of the Grandfather Conant are 1. A Piece wrote upon some Jarring Sentiments among my Brethren about Predestination and Election. 2. A Profession of Faith. 3. A Letter to Mr. Lee. 4. A Discourse on the Fall and Recovery of Man. 5. Thoughts upon a Man's Spirit being generated with his Body. 6. A Covenant. 7. Thoughts upon the New Birth.

It touches one to read these things now, and to feel, as you read, that they must have come out of the heart of a man who was all on fire about them; yet to notice how they are, dead as the hand that trembled over the pages when they were penned. One or two things still have a spark of life left. Here is a sentence from the introduction to Thoughts on a Man's Spirit being generated with his Body: "After a long travail of mind about what constitutes or makes up the man, I am now about to conclude, or indeed have concluded, that I have always been entirely mistaken about the whole matter."

There is also a touch of life in the letter to Mr. Lee. It seems that this Mr. Lee, of Royalstone, in the year 1782, preached a sermon in Mr. Conant's hearing, in which he set forth the doctrine that heaven is the purchase for the sinner of the sufferings of Christ. This doctrine Ebenezer Conant could by no means allow. So meeting the minister after sermon at the house of Mr. Cushing, he gave him a piece of his mind about it, and this was his mind, — That not heaven, but freedom from sin, is what Christ purchased through his sufferings. How long the two men disputed, the record does not tell. Judging from experience and from what followed, I should say that they hammered away at the thing until it was time to go home, and then left it very much as they found it.

Ebenezer Conant, however, will not allow the matter to rest; he sends this letter off at once to the hapless preacher to settle him. It is a strong argument of the sort made in those controversies in which men

“Squabble for words upon the altar floor,
And tear the book in struggles for the binding;”

but the last words go into the real life of that

old time in a curious and striking manner, and are worth preserving : —

“ Suppose,” Ebenezer Conant says, “ that Governor Hancock should purchase a number of prisoners from on board the prison ships, and set them at liberty in Whitehall. Who would use such an unmeaning term as to say that the Governor gave the money to purchase Whitehall and not the prisoners? How, then, can we say that Christ purchased heaven, and not freedom from sin? From your friend, EBENEZER CONANT. April 18, 1782.”

We may well believe how the good man would chuckle over this parting shot, would watch where it struck, and feel sure that now Mr. Lee was finally and forever routed, and would vend no more such heresies in Royalstone.

But these are the only things in the entire series of treatises that seem to have any life left in them; the valuable element they all hold besides is the revelation they make of this Grandfather Conant, as intensely interested in these nice points in theology, while he was also striving to raise a large family on a small and poor farm. They were to him supreme questions of the life and

soul. How he became so interested, John Conant, the son, will tell us presently. What Ebenezer, the father, tells us is that the keen, high-questioning, and dissenting spirit which had made his native France too hot for the old Huguenot Conant was back and busy again in the New England farmer, — a spirit that could no more be laid by the Congregational minister than by the Roman priest.

“The first thing that I can remember,” John Conant says, in his half of the book, “was, when two years and a half old, hearing the guns fire at the Concord fight; then, when I was seven years old, came the dark days of May 20, 1780, when the people ran about in great terror, believing that the end of the world had come. I remember holding on to my mother, because I felt sure I should be more safe with her than I could be with any other person. Then I remember how this dark day brought a great concern to my soul. I reflected very seriously on the awful condition I should be in if the world *should* come to an end. In the midst of these broodings, a Baptist preacher came to our town. The people mocked him and hooted at him; but some,

out of curiosity, went to hear him. Among others my father and mother went, and they came home pricked to the heart. Long before this, on the birth of their first child, they had joined the Congregational church by what is called the half-way covenant, so that they might have their children sprinkled. This mock baptism was performed on myself when I was only eight days old. Now they were dissatisfied with the half-way covenant religion, and followed the Baptist minister no longer from curiosity, but to obtain salvation.

“In 1781, my father fell sick ; he was sick two years, which made us very poor. I can never forget his last address to us, made the week before he died. My poor mother was in very great distress about her large family of little children. She could not tell how we should live when he was gone, and begged my father to give some of his children away to friends who would gladly receive them if he gave them on his death-bed. But when she had done speaking, he looked up into her face with such a joyful look as I never saw before in my life, and said, ‘My dear wife, I have already done that. I have given away all

your children to the dearest Friend in the world ; I have given them away to God.' We were all there to hear that, and we never forgot it. Then my father died in about a week, as I said, and this is part of a little poem my sister made for the sad occasion : —

'Come, friends, and hear my mournful theme;
It's not a fancy, nor a dream;
But 'tis as sad as sad can be, —
My father's in eternity.'"

The story of the life of this John Conant would be well worth telling for its own sake, if there was room for it in this small book. The man was a noble specimen of that sturdy, capable, self-contained nature only found in its perfection in New England, determined always to get along in the world, to gather property and influence, but with a solemn religious element woven through and through the business faculty. The sort of man most faithful wherever he is found in the support of schools, churches, and public libraries, the controlling element so far, thank God, in our American life ; for what is popularly known as the Yankee is only the exception to this ruling man, the Yankee being only

what is left when this religious element has rotted away, — a new New England man without a conscience or a present sense of God.

When John Conant stood by the death-bed he has told us of with so touching a pathos, he was only just turned ten years of age. But he says, “Being the eldest son, the sole management of our small farm, with what assistance my mother could render, fell on my shoulders ; so my labors on the farm were very hard for a boy, and so incessant that I had very little time for books and learning. What small chance I had, however, I improved to the utmost, learnt to read and write, and arithmetic as far as the rule of three. These advantages were all I could ever command when I was a boy ; but we always maintained our family worship, and as my father left a chest of carpenter’s tools, my natural talent led me to use them to such advantage that I soon became skilful in joiner’s work. I got along so well in this that when I was seventeen, I built for my mother a saw-mill, and then, as I never did love farming, I began to work as a journeyman carpenter, and so at eighteen I

found that I could hold my own with the good workmen in our town.”

“After some time,” John Conant continues, “while at work at my trade, I hurt my arm on the elbow. The hurt turned to a white swelling, and all the doctors told me I must have my arm amputated. This news distressed me dreadfully. I could not bear the thought, so I determined to see what I could do to save the arm, in spite of the doctors. Hearing of a noted student at a distance, I left home, and travelled eighteen miles on foot, in extreme pain, to see this new man. He encouraged me to believe that I could be cured; so I stayed with him a long time, he doing all he could to save my right arm, and I doing all I could to work for him with my left. And so it came to pass at last that I was cured, and the doctor did not charge me much either, because, as he said, I was a good boy, and had done all I could to help him too; so I returned home with two sound arms and a grateful heart to my mother.”

After this, John Conant is promoted to be master of the inside work in the new Bolton meeting-house, but as he finds the Bolton minister is ex-

tremely stupid, he walks five miles every Sunday, to hear a man who pleases him better.

In the fall of 1794, he gets married, and then finds it is time to be looking round for a larger place than the old homestead ; so he heads a little party of four, and starts for what was then the wilderness of Western New York. There they buy land, cut a road through fifteen miles of brush to get at it, do not like the place at all when they come to see it, and so return home. After this, being on a visit to Brandon, Vermont, he saw the Falls there, bought them on credit for \$ 1,133.34, returned home, removed the family at once, and went to work to build a dam. The result is in his own words: "With good health and courage, the Lord hath so prospered me ever since that time that I feel sure that I did my duty."

Here in Brandon John Conant found a feeble Baptist church, which he gathered into his house when the weather was cold, and when it was warm, into his shop ; but in 1800 he writes, "I myself, I say it with modesty, being the main man, with eleven others built a meeting-house forty feet by thirty-five, and there we worshipped

thirty-nine years." In 1801, he was made justice of the peace : in 1806, clerk to the church ; in 1809, he was chosen to represent the town in the Legislature ; in 1815, was appointed by government to assess the town for a direct tax ; and was a member of that Electoral College for choosing a president which resulted in the choice of Harrison. In 1818 he was made deacon of his church, which office he says, " I consider the most honorable and responsible ever conferred on me by mortal man." After this, he built a dwelling-house, a stone mill, a seminary, some brick stores, and a grist mill that cost eight thousand dollars. When his people had occupied their meeting-house thirty-nine years, he writes, " Before I die, I want to see a better place of worship, such as will be in all respects respectable, and where others may be induced to come and hear for themselves. So I feel it my duty to go ahead, and build such a house." And in 1833, the house is finished, and the church so blessed as to satisfy him fully for all his sacrifices, privation, and toil. In 1843, when he was threescore and ten, John Conant felt a great longing, before he should die, to see the great West. He had a

strange impression that he should never return home alive, but that did not matter ; he felt he must go West. And so he made all ready as a man going on a way whence he should not return, commended himself to God, and started for Rochester. After a happy visit with his children, who were settled in Rochester, he left for Buffalo, thence by steam to Cleveland, thence to Cincinnati, St. Louis, Galena, Mineral Point, Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Joseph, Detroit, and then home again. "So mercifully was an old man of over seventy preserved in all this long and dangerous journey."

And so within this story of a dutiful and helpful outward life, told by the man in a way that would seem like egotism if the life itself were not so full of quiet heroism, we can see that John Conant held and nursed a sweet and well-toned religious spirit always, and we gather from it all, that, in some deeper way than that of the common daily bread, the faith in which the father had given all his children to God on his death-bed had borne its fruit, and the look on the face of the dying man, such as they who saw it had never seen before, was the light from the immanent heaven.

The language in which the little story is told is cast in the common mould of the time and the sect; but the struggle and victory it records is common to all times and to every faithful soul. The book closes with these sentences: "On the 30th day of July, 1786, the church obtained a faint hope for me, and I had also a faint hope for myself. I was on that day baptized and greatly enjoyed the ordinance, and I look back to that time, now I am an old man, and ask if I have done my duty? I regret I have not done more, and yet I have done so much that I wonder at it when I consider my feeble powers, and I bless God that the outlook ahead grows brighter and brighter. Just one month to a day after his inaugural address our President is dead. Why is he taken and I left? Is there any good still that I can do? Then God help me to do it. Time looks very short now, yet I do not grieve for this, because I know that when I have done my work, I shall cheerfully leave it for a happy home. My path has been strewn with blessing, but I cannot say I want to live my life over again, because I am not sure if I did, whether I should mend the bad places in it, or make more. And

it has been a very great luxury for me to give my property to the cause of God, — so great, indeed, that I fear sometimes that I have given it from a *selfish* motive. May the Lord forgive me if this be so. I have tried to keep to a higher motive ; and now, in these my last days, I can truly say I am happy in my wife, my children, my family connections, in society, in the church, in my minister, and in God.

‘Let the sweet hope that thou art mine
My life and death attend ;
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey’s end.’”

This is all that need be said about the Conant foreelders, but this much I have felt I must say. About the grandfather, who, eighty years ago, went so quietly into his rest leaning upon God, and this good John Conant, who has also found the rest that remains. Both together reveal a sound natural and spiritual life. They were closely knitted to our life as it is, were full of its deep sympathies and active duties. Every line I have found about these old Conants shows me that they

“ Wore the white lily of a blameless life.”

That of itself is often no small matter, but they did more than that; they did their share to plant, deep and strong, what to them were the very foundations of all true prosperity, religious convictions, and religious institutions. And so Ebenezer Conant, with his seven treatises, and John Conant, with his endless religious activities, as well as the good old man, still working and worshipping among us after more than ninety years, are of the true stock of this man whose life I mean to write, true spiritual as well as natural foreelders.

When a gentleman, lately watching a designer at work in one of our New England factories, said to him, "How long have you been learning to do that?" the man replied, "Six hundred years; so long ago the first of us began to design, and we have been at it ever since." It is so with many things; it runs in the blood, men say. That is but a hint of the real truth; it runs in that which informs the blood. And when our Scriptures are so constant to this, that through certain lines certain men must come to us, they show us that always these spirit-

ual and natural facts have been recognized, and that, —

“ So the old order changeth to the new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways ”

II.

GENESIS AND EXODUS.

AUGUSTUS HAMMOND CONANT, the only son of Ebenezer Conant and Fanny Clifford, his wife, was born in Brandon, Vermont, on the 16th of October, 1811. The story told of his childhood and youth is like all such stories, simple and brief. He was full of affection, and was truthful and gentle, always loved one little kinsman so well that, though they were parted at four years old, when Augustus, seventeen years after, was on his way through the West, he turned out of his way to see his friend's face again, and take up the thread of their child-love. It is remembered that while still a small boy, some other boy did a mischief for which Augustus was blamed; but though he got a severe whipping, he would not betray his companion. In the summer of his fourth year he was sent to school, and there he presently won this certificate, which is still in

existence in the teacher's own hand, and very much adorned with flourishes: "This may certify that Augustus Hammond Conant is a very good scholar, and has particularly excelled his class in spelling. Signed, Harriet Stebbings."

In this first summer at school the boy got along so well as to be able to read easily in Webster's old spelling-book. After this, he only went to school as he could be spared from the farm his father had got in Brandon; but he made so good a use of his time that as he grew up he began to dream about a liberal education and a profession. But Ebenezer Conant, his father, thought there were too many professional men already; he feared, also, that a course of study would unfit his son for the active duties of life; he preferred, also, that Augustus should be a farmer, and so, at last, it was settled that a farmer he should be. There is hardly a word about these days in the letters that have come to me, but I have learned from those who knew Mr. Conant intimately, that he did not like to talk about his early youth; would only now and then mention it, and then it was to recall some wonderful Saturday afternoons, when, the week-days' toil being over and

the Sunday's toil not yet begun, he would go out alone and

" Bathe his weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest."

Wandering over pasture and by woodland wherever he would, the memory of these days never left him ; but, on the whole, the alternation between hard week-days and hard Sundays pressed heavily on his life then, and on his memory forever after.

When he was about nineteen, I find this bud of promise on the tree of his life : " *July 14, 1830.* I, Augustus Hammond Conant, do this day resolve to break myself of every evil practice, and to forsake every sin as revealed to me by the light of *reason*. So help me God ! "

It seems that a protracted meeting had been held during the previous winter in a neighbor's house ; that the youth had gone there, and been touched by what he heard. He was stirred in this way to take a step toward joining some church ; but he was dissatisfied with Calvinism, had got a glimpse somewhere of the glorious doctrine of universal salvation, and wanted to see more of it. His sister reports a talk she had

with him at this time, which gave her great uneasiness as to his orthodoxy. But during the next summer, declaring openly his doubts about eternal damnation, he offered himself for membership to the Baptist church in Pittsford, of which his parents were members, and was baptized and taken into full communion. In the winter following he taught school, in the summer again worked on the farm; altogether his life was opening into a quiet and gracious contentment; he grew in favor both with God and man.

One letter still exists written at this time to his sister. It is notable for a longing to enter more deeply into a personal experience of what there is no better name for than the grace of God in the soul, and, also, for the record of what seems to have been his first bruise against the mysteries of Providence. He says, "The other morning I awoke in the gray of light, and going to my window, saw that it was raining heavily. It had been raining so for some time past that everything was afloat and rotting with the wet; then I said in my heart, How *can* a good God send so much rain to destroy all our hopes? But, presently, something said, As men now live they love

the pleasures of the world so well, mixed as they are with pain, that they can hardly find time for a single thought of God. Now if our pleasures were perfect, is it not probable that we should never think of him at all?" A curious speculation with a curious conclusion, that the best way to bring a man to God is to snub and disappoint him. But this stirring in the young man's nature was not to be satisfied with these things. Indeed, it was less a baptism of water than of fire, and the new birth, a prophecy always of a new life, was, in this instance, to find a noble and ample fulfilment.

The gold and silver mines of the far West in those days were the virgin prairies of Illinois, to which the attention of the East was just then especially directed. The State at that time was but sparsely settled; the whole number of inhabitants hardly exceeded the present population of Chicago, and that was mainly confined to the central and southern tiers of counties, and it was a weary way from the Green Mountains to the far West before the days of railroads. But then there was an adventurous tingle in the Covenant blood. Had not Uncle John once cut his

way through fifteen miles of wilderness? And there was money in Ebenezer Conant's locker, and friends and kinsfolk scattered all the way westward from Brandon to Vandalia. So to the West young Conant determined to go, that, at least, he might spy out the land. He started in September, 1832, a month before he was twenty-one years old.

Of this journey the young man kept a brief journal that is quite interesting now for the quick glances at life, it has preserved, along the line of travel westward thirty-five years ago.

Starting from Whitehall, in the canal-boat "Missanic," Mr. Conant went by Fort Ann and Fort Miller to Saratoga. He was delighted with the valley of the Mohawk and its fine fertile soil, but was told that most of the farms were owned by Dutchmen, who would not sell a farm for money enough to cover it. Not a bad idea, one thinks, of the Dutchmen, because a farm for farming purposes should always be considered to be worth still more to the man who has it than to the man who wants it. At Schenectady, a place of considerable business, he notices that the old buildings are all in the Gothic style, with very sharp

roofs ; and here he saw, for the first time, a railroad, on which were two cars fastened together, and carrying from twenty to thirty passengers, all drawn by one horse at a speed of a mile in five minutes, — he was told. He is charmed with Little Falls, and pronounces it the most beautiful place he ever saw. He admires Utica, finds Palmyra a thriving village, the farms about it good, and the land valued at about twenty-seven dollars an acre, while wheat sells at from seventy-five cents to a dollar a bushel. In one week from the time he left home, Mr. Conant had come to Rochester, and there he saw the place from which poor foolish Sam Patch had made his last leap into the dark. Then he came to Buffalo, where he found friends and a fine city, that, he was told, had increased in wealth and population beyond estimate since the Grand Canal was opened.

From Buffalo, on the steamboat "Superior," he went to Detroit, and among the things which impressed him on his way there, he makes special mention of the greatness of Cleveland as a place of business, and he himself counted no less than twelve schooners there besides canal-boats. They

encountered a heavy storm after leaving Cleveland, in which the steamer "bounded like a puff-ball on the billows," but our young traveller managed to escape the general sea-sickness by lying still on his back, and so, without further adventure they came finally to Detroit, where he put up at Campbell's Hotel, finding good quarters.

So far the journey West had been an easy and a pleasant one; walking or riding, as suited him best, he had encountered no hardships and undergone little fatigue. But from Detroit to Chicago, and thence to the Mississippi, Mr. Conant adopted another programme; he determined to foot it. He gives no reason for this in his journal, but from what I can gather otherwise, I think it probable that when he landed in Detroit, he found that his purse was still lighter even than his fatigue; it was natural, also, that a young man should want to see the wonderful country he had come to study, in some more intimate way than from the deck of a steamboat or the inside of a stage, if there had been a stage then on the route he intended to take. "Starting on the Monday from Detroit," he says, "over the worst roads I had ever seen, I went forward and westward on

foot, and came that evening, footsore and very weary, to Saline, where I met a party of soldiers returning from the Indian war." Jonesville he found a town of two frame and four log houses. On the Cold Water Prairie he saw six deer in one herd, and again met a party of soldiers, with cavalry and forty wagons. Passing through a thick forest after this, and being very hungry and tired, he came at last to the house of a lonely settler, where he rested, while the good backwoods woman made him eat some bread and milk and honey, for which he could not prevail on her to take any pay, which generosity brings the reflection, as he walks on again, that he had found greater kindness in those lonely backwoods than in the *splendors* of crowded *villages*. On the Sunday he came to White Pigeon, where he attended meeting all day. On Monday to Niles, which he found quite a village, with four stores and two taverns, and here he rested three days, built a chimney, and taught a class of four young men stenography, by which he more than made expenses. Finally, refreshed, he started again westward, but being belated that night, he was lost in a swamp, where he plunged about for a long time until

at last seeing a light at a distance, he hallooed as loud as he could, and was rescued by a boy with a lantern. On the Saturday he walked through part of Indiana to the house of an old Frenchman, who, married to a squaw and living on the Indian lands, with no other house for fifty miles, devotes himself, Mr. Conant says, to the fleecing of such hapless travellers as must either stop with him or sleep in the woods. On the Sunday he came to Lake Michigan, and travelled thirty-five miles on its pleasant pebbly beach, and so at last, on Monday, the fifteenth day out from Detroit, he came to Chicago.

In the Chicago of 1832, however, Mr. Conant found nothing worth his notice except Fort Dearborn. He thinks the town is so situated that it will eventually become a place of considerable importance ; but, resting only an hour in Chicago, he started for the Fox River country. " Eighteen miles out from Chicago," he says, " I slept with a wagoner under his wagon, and woke up in the morning to find a sharp frost." At the Dupage he found the little settlement rapidly recovering from the horrors of the Indian war. Heard that not less than a hundred houses had

been built during the past three years in a circuit of twenty-five miles, and that the settlers now raise all they need for their living.

Near the Bureau River, he lost his way, but found it again when night came on by the prairie fires stretching for vast distances along the horizon. Stopping on the Sunday, after a walk of twenty-five miles, he went to a Methodist meeting, and there found such confusion and clamor as he had never witnessed before in the name of religion, in all his life. At Ellis' Mill, where he stopped next day, after walking only twenty miles, because it was twenty-five miles then to the next house, he found that the wolves in that region were fearfully troublesome, destroying the sheep and hogs so that it was hardly possible to keep any. But he found, also, that wild honey was so abundant in the bluffs and banks of the river that the bee-hunters sold it for three cents a pound ; and the land is so rich that turnips are raised that weigh twenty-five pounds. In this wild country Mr. Conant again lost his way, and was most of all distressed because he could not see a single tree " any more than if he had been in the middle of the Atlantic ;" found his way

at last, however, after much wandering and some suffering, and so came finally, without any other adventure, to the Mississippi, crossing which river he landed at Keokuk Point, there intending to wait for a steamboat to the mouth of the Ohio.

Keokuk, he found in those early days a sink of depravity, by far the most wicked place he had ever seen in his life. But instead of fretting over what he was as yet powerless to amend, he went to work husking corn, chopping wood, and doing chores generally, for worthy Mr. Campbell, a sort of second Lot in this Iowa Sodom, delighted every day with the sight of acres and acres of wild ducks and geese on the river, and islands within sight of where he was at work.

Taking a passage at last in the "William Wallace," he went down the river. Quincy he found, even then, a notable town, with a fine hum of business about it. St. Louis was a city of six or eight thousand souls, the streets very narrow and poorly paved, and the old French buildings mean and squalid, but disappearing rapidly before the march of improvement.

On the steamboat, the heart of the wholesome, well-bred Vermont boy turned sick at the sight

of slaves, and the clank of their chains. Helpless to do anything but fret, he could only turn for relief to the noble and beautiful scenery through which they were gliding. The beautiful islands covered with trees, and walled thick with grape-vines, dusk with ripe fruit in the golden autumn sunshine, especially attracted him, and made him wonder at the fertility of this new land. At the mouth of the Ohio, he makes no mention of Cairo, but speaks of the noble trees there, — sycamore, cottonwood, elm, and myrtle. Starting then up the Ohio, and leaving the clank of the chains, he was still shocked by the reckless gambling that was carried on all day and all night long. Louisville he found wonderful for business, so crowded with steamboats that it was difficult to land. Cincinnati was a large and beautiful town, with a market reported to be equal to that of Philadelphia. At Parkersburg, then not much of a place, one of the firemen on the boat was seized on the suspicion of his being a slave, but he had his papers with him, though it was believed on the boat that they would not have saved him from being sold down the river, had not the captain gone with him before the

magistrate and pulled him through. At this the young Vermonter cries out in his diary, "I would not exchange the cold, rough hills of Vermont, uncontaminated as they are with the breath of slavery, for the finest country ever cultivated by the slave." Marietta Mr. Conant found a very handsome place indeed; Wheeling, a mile long, built of brick, and containing eight thousand people; Steubenville, flourishing exceedingly, and Pittsburg, the wonder of all that his eyes had ever seen since he left home for elegance, grandeur, and business.

From Pittsburg, he took the stage to Erie, passing through Meadville, then a very busy and important place. He found, when he got to Erie, that the steamboat he had meant to take had left, so he started on foot for Buffalo, forcing his way through great storms of rain and snow. Arriving at Buffalo, he found his kinsfolk all well, but they were sure that *he* had fallen a victim to the cholera, as they had not heard from him for so long. And so at last, very thankful in his heart, he came to his home among the cold, rough hills of Vermont, where such welcome waited the wanderer as we may guess, but are not told.

III.

FRONTIER FARMER.

How happy is the condition of an honest farmer, safe in his own resources! He can hear the roar of the great storms that wreck the fortunes of the merchant, but the changes of trade, the pressure of hard times, all the ups and downs of fortune that send men from the heights of wealth to the depths of poverty, he seldom or never feels. He sows his seed in hope, and reaps his harvest in a full content; his bank is full of potatoes; his stock is alive, and growing; his lots are not blocks but sections. "I grow more than content with farming, I am in love with it."

This is what Mr. Conant writes from the West in a letter to his sister, dateless, but from an allusion in it to Van Buren, written, I suppose, in the spring of 1837. He had then been in the West nearly two years; his report of the good land on his return home had created a revolution.

New England is a dear good place to be born in, a noble nursery of men, and her true sons can never forget their true mother; but the family is large, and the old homestead is limited, and so it came to pass at last that Eben Conant, with all his household, determined to move on in the track of the sun.

It seems that there was already land located and secured to P. and E. Conant, down on the Mississippi, and it had once been the intention of settling there; but it was finally determined to stake out the new home a good deal farther north. And so at last the right spot was found on the Desplaine about twenty miles north-west of Chicago. The country there is low and flat, but very fertile and easy to farm. The land then was just as the Indians had left it, and was not even surveyed; but there was plenty of wood on it, and wild game and fish. A rising city lay within a day's journey, ready to take everything that could be raised, and pay cash for it, and to supply everything that was needed in return; and altogether the undertaking was full of encouragement to a prudent and enterprising man.

Mr. Conant, who went at once on land of his own, kept a journal of his career as a frontier farmer, from the first of January, 1836, to the middle of May, 1840. It is a brief and terse record of what was done, as real in its own way as the work he was doing, and as simple and modest as the man. He seldom spares more than one line for one day, and sometimes writes that in short-hand; never makes a reflection, or chronicles a mood; says a good deal about the weather, but it is mainly about clear and sunny weather, a delicate intimation, one cannot but feel, of the weather that then and always prevailed in the man's own soul; for—

“Held our eyes no sunny sheen,
How could sunshine e'er be seen?”

Beyond this turn for seeing in almost every day a *sun* day, however, nothing can be more constant and true to the hard, bare facts of the frontier life than this journal; yet as you read on line by line, the index at last opens the book of his life to you, and you are aware of a certain power and pathos in the brief, downright chronicles that are not often found in more leisurely and scholarly journalizing. Still it would not be

well to print the record line by line, as it stands, in this little book. Most of it could have no interest to the reader now. And so taking the first dozen entries just as they stand, as a specimen of the whole, I will then make such extracts as I hope will preserve the essential spirit of the entire work."

"1836, *Jan.* 1. Attended to the survey of my claim.

"2. Drew rails.

"3. Sunday. Wrote poetry.

"4. Made shelves and split rails.

"5. Went to Chicago with a load of potatoes.

"6. Sold my potatoes for seventy-five cents a bushel.

"7. Cut apples, worked at my house, husked corn.

"8. Attended a meeting of settlers for securing to each man his present claim.

"9. Cut rail timber.

"10. Sunday. Went to Chicago.

"11. Commenced thrashing.

"12. Still thrashing."

This is the literal side of the young man's

daily prayer for daily bread, the common level God had ordained he should keep, with now and then a glimpse into deeper and higher things, that he tries at first to turn into "a song," but at last into "a sermon." And this hither and other side is to be traced clean through, together with a gradual deepening of the intellectual and spiritual life and power, that ends in his going to Cambridge to prepare for the ministry, while yet the common level is relieved here and there in still other ways more akin to our common life, as will be seen in some of the quotations I now make from the journal.

"1836. Attended a meeting called to get the mail route changed from Chicago to Green Bay, from the beach of the lake to Auxplane River.

"Attended arbitration between father and Rufus Saule; decided in favor of Rufus, and let him have some potatoes.

"Read Mason on 'Self-knowledge.'

"Read the 'Latin Grammar.'

"Brought in a deer.

"Read the 'Life of Josephine.' Got out wood for chairs.

“Made a coffin for Mrs. Dougherty, and helped to bury her.

“Made and bottomed chairs.

“*May* 10. Mrs. Hoard and Betsy Kelsey arrived.

“11. Planted corn and prepared for the wedding.

“12. Married Betsy Kelsey. *Weather very fine and sunny.*

“*June* 3. Made a table, and borrowed six bushels of potatoes, to be paid back with interest in the fall.

“4. Wife eighteen to-day. Made a few articles of furniture.

“Read ‘Paley’s Natural Theology.’ Meeting at my house. Mr. Kent preached again. Made a churn.

“*Sept.* 28. Heard big wolves howling. Hunted deer.

“Worked at shoemaking.

“Made a coffin for H. Dougherty.

“Plastered my house.

“Dressed pig and calves torn by wolves.

“Dug a well.

“Killed a badger.

“ Killed a wolf.

“ Corn half destroyed by blackbirds.

“ Set out shade-trees. Read Cowper.

“ Took up a bee tree to hive for honey.

“ Hunted deer.

“ Snow a foot deep.

“ Attended a Christmas party.

“ 1837, *May* 4th. Wrote a temperance address.

“ 11. Temperance meeting at my house, and society formed.

“ Read the ‘ Saturday Evening Post,’ and wrote to the Patent Office.

“ Made a ditching-machine. Read ‘ Croly’s British Poets.’

“ Read the Bible. Read ‘ Dick’s Philosophy of a Future State.’ Studied Algebra. Made a chest of drawers.

“ Hunted a panther. Went to a bridge-raising.

“ 1838, *Feb.* 18. Meeting at my house. I read a sermon.

“ Began to read the ‘ Western Messenger.’ Made a back-kitchen.

“ Hewed timber for a barn.

“ Made a wagon.

- “ Made a cheese-press.
- “ Unwell, and so studied algebra.
- “ Made a sun-dial.
- “ *Aug.* 19. Sister Harriet died.
- “ 20. Made a coffin for Sister Harriet.
- “ 21. Attended Sister Harriet’s funeral.
- “ *Sept.* 16. Attended meeting, and read a sermon of Channing’s.
- “ *Oct.* 16. Went to the mill.
- “ 21. Returned from the mill.
- “ Read the ‘ History of Rome.’
- “ Hunted deer.
- “ *Nov.* 13. Rain. Only once before had rain enough to soak through in five months.
- “ Went to the miller’s to read Channing. Read at the meeting Channing on ‘ Self-denial.’
- “ Unwell, so wrote temperance address.
- “ Temperance meeting ; delivered my address.
- “ Read ‘ Statement of Reasons.’ Circulated subscription-paper for a school. Mended boots.
- “ 1839, *Jan.* 19. Hunted panther.
- “ Sat on jury.
- “ Began to distribute tracts. Helped to make a post-office.
- “ Wrote a temperance address.

“ *May 12.* Attended Unitarian meeting in Chicago.

“ Read ‘ Bancroft’s Sermons.’

“ *June 29.* Agreed to deliver an oration.

“ *July 4th.* Delivered my oration.

“ *July 7th.* Attended meeting in Chicago, and became acquainted with Mr. Hosmer, Mrs. Clarke, and Mrs. Gale.

“ 13. Got my oration published, and paid for.

“ 14. Attended Mr. Hosmer’s meeting again.

“ Read Horne.

“ Arranged my minerals.

“ Distributed oration.

“ Made a coffin.

“ *Oct. 20.* Wrote a sermon from Matt. vi. 9, 27.

“ Wrote another sermon.

“ Read Locke. Examined the school-teacher.

“ Wrote a sermon.

“ 1840, *Jan. 4th.* Preached at McHenry.

“ *Feb. 1.* Wrote a funeral sermon.

“ 9. Preached at Geneva.

“ 25. Preached at Geneva.

“ Read Norton on the Trinity.

“ Made soap.

“ Boiled sugar.

“ Wrote a sermon on the Aim of Life.

“ *April 5.* Preached at Geneva.

“ *May 25.* Started for New England, to attend the Divinity School in Cambridge.”

These extracts need no comment ; they speak for themselves. I have printed them as they stand in the journal, because it seems most natural to let the words tell their own tale in their own way. What more there is to tell about this period, must be stated as briefly as possible. The letters reveal nothing more than is revealed in the journal, except the exceeding love that continually filled the heart of the writer for the friends and kinsmen he had left in Vermont, and brief hints of the struggles through which he had to pass, before it became clear to himself, and those most interested in his movements, that he must give his heart utterly to the doctrine of the one God, our Father, and make his open profession in harmony with his inward faith ; and then that he must give up every plan he had projected so far, on the ground that he was to be a farmer, and give up the farm itself, with

its cherished independence, because he was "separated into the gospel of God."

Two things beside the tendency in his own nature, and what naturally came of it, such as going to Miller's to read Channing "quicken'd this movement." The Fourth of July oration delivered to his own friends, and neighbors on the Desplaine, turned out to be more than his hearers had expected. Instead of reciting the comfortable old doctrine common to the occasion, that there was no such freedom, or virtue, or valor as ours on the earth, the young man got a hard gripe on slavery, held it up in the face of the July sun, just as it was, went on to show that such a virtue as that was filthy rags, and that the only valor worth the name was that which dared say so, and take open ground against the old rank lie. The consequence came instantly. Mr. Conant was denounced, reviled, and invited to eat his words. Instead of doing that, he went to Chicago, and got the oration printed at his own expense, sent it flying, broadcast, over the settlement, and so became known at once as one of the champions for freedom in that part of the country. But before this, as

the journal tells us, he had made the acquaintance of Mrs. Clarke, the mother of Rev. James F. Clarke, in her day the greatest missionary of our faith, in the West, among women. In a most interesting letter, written a few months before her death, Mrs. Clarke says,—

“ I remember Mr. Conant, how he came into my son’s store to make some purchases, and while standing at the counter, took up the ‘ Western Messenger,’ was so interested in it that he forgot everything besides until he had read it through and then asked my son to lend him all that he could spare to take home. After this, when Dr. Hosmer came up from Buffalo to preach for us, Mr. Conant came in to hear him. I saw his face as I went in to meeting, and it seemed illuminated with the feelings that filled his heart ; I introduced him to the preacher after service, and the result was that Dr. Hosmer advised him to go East and study for the ministry, offered to write to Dr. Ware about receiving him, and to the Unitarian Association to help him. ‘ No,’ said the young man, ‘ I thank you, but I had rather not begin by begging. I will sell my crops, take orders for payment on Vermont, and then take my wife and

two children to live there with their folks, while I am studying in Cambridge.'

"From that time he began to prepare for his new life, rose very early every morning and studied till it was time to begin work on his farm, and whenever, besides, he could get a spare moment, and then in the spring he sold his crops, and started with his family for Vermont. But when he arrived there, he could not get his checks cashed, and so feared that, after all, he would be compelled to give up his plan. He wrote me about his trouble, and that he was determined to go to Cambridge, see Dr. Ware, and lay the matter before him. He lost his way in going, and began to feel that it could not be the divine intention he should study for the ministry. He arrived at last, however, and began to tell the Doctor why it was now impossible he should come to school, as he had no money; but the Doctor said, 'I have a letter for you, perhaps that may help you.' On opening the letter, it was found to contain an enclosure of fifty dollars from a gentleman who had heard of Mr. Conant's efforts to get an education, together with the assurance that more should be forthcoming if

needed, and thus the way opened at once to his entrance on the course of study."

And then Dr. Hosmer also writes how he recollects preaching in Chicago, — the introduction of the bright, earnest young farmer, the interesting talk they had, how he felt that here was one called to be an apostle, and said so, with what result I have already related. But instead of arguing the point of independence, he let Mr. Conant take his own course about the crops, went home and told his story to one who never could be indifferent to any noble endeavor, great-hearted Mr. Huidekoper, of Meadville. The response was the letter waiting with Dr. Ware, and others to follow in a generous succession. From Miss Shippen, also, and Mrs. Clarke, and from other friends, as they heard of the luckless Vermont bills, there came ready and effectual help, filling the heart of the young student so full of joyful and grateful surprise, that, whereas he had never let his disappointment rob him of an hour's sleep, he suddenly found that now he could not sleep for gladness, but lay awake all night thinking of all the good fortune that had befallen him, until the sun rose, and it was time to begin his morning lessons

From the "Western Messenger."

DESPLAINE RIVER, COOK Co., ILL.,

Feb. 24, 1839.

DEAR BROTHER CLARKE, — Please accept this cordial salutation of a lover of truth, a friend of spiritual freedom and rational Christianity, one among the hundreds of those that hail the "Messenger" as the bearer of glad tidings, diffusing the light of truth, the blessings of spiritual life, and the joys of rational religion wherever it circulates. The intelligence of success in your arduous labors will doubtless afford you some satisfaction and encouragement. And I therefore not only feel it to be a duty, but a privilege, to give you a short account of the doings of the "Messenger" here.

The first time I ever saw the "Messenger" was in June, 1837, at the store of W. H. and H. F. Clarke, in Chicago. The name of Unitarian and Deist, or Infidel, were at that time very near synonymous with me, but on examination, I discovered something so liberal, free-minded, and rational in the work that, notwithstanding its bad name, I subscribed for it for one year, and paid for one volume of the back numbers. The systems of orthodoxy, in which I was instructed

in childhood, I rejected soon after I began to think for myself as contrary to reason and the Bible, and repugnant to the best feelings of humanity. The doctrine of ultra-Universalism was too gross and inconsistent for belief, and I adopted, as the most rational theory, the doctrine of universal restoration. I had frequently been denounced as a heretic, and for that reason had less dread of bad names. I resolved fearlessly, though carefully, to examine the subject, and follow Truth whether she lead through good or bad report. I soon became convinced that the bad name properly belonged to me, most of the views coinciding exactly with my own; and many subjects, which were before dark and mysterious, were rendered perfectly clear and consistent. My father, who lives near me, seemed to feel some anxiety lest I should be led into worse error. He had been tried for heresy, by an orthodox council in Vermont, because he renounced creeds and confessions of faith, and adopted some of the sentiments of A. Campbell, of Virginia. He had broken the shackles of sectarianism, and was willing to read and examine. I lent him the "Messenger;" he has examined, and

truth has triumphed. Though he has not yet in a public manner avowed himself a Unitarian, yet in conversation with friends he frequently and fearlessly advocates the doctrine. Since I embraced the sentiment, I have been furnished by a Unitarian friend, who has a large library, with the discourses of Channing and Ware, and some of the writings of Bernard and Jason Whitman, of Gardner, Priestly, Dewey, and others, and a few tracts which I have distributed among those who are inclined to read and examine.

At a meeting established by the Methodists in the neighborhood, I have, in the absence of the preachers, read several of Channing's discourses, and they have generally been well received, and in some instances were much admired. The preachers seem much afraid of Unitarianism, and say many things against it containing more bitterness than truth. I have lent and circulated the "Messenger" somewhat, with the hope of adding to your list of subscribers; but I do not know that it has procured any new ones yet. One or two individuals have said they would like to subscribe for it, and I have directed them to your brothers in Chicago. I should circulate it more,

were it not that I wish to preserve the volume for binding. What few tracts I have are not idle. I ride around occasionally and exchange them, so as to have *all* read by *all*, and I feel confident that the good seed will not be lost. If no more, it will do something to remove prejudice, and counteract the influence of bad report. The spirit of the time is far in advance of the spirit of orthodoxy. The liberal, purifying, elevating views of a rational Christianity are called for from every quarter. Am I mistaken? Is it the dream of enthusiasm, or has a brighter day dawned upon the world? The effulgence of truth seems to glow with a sublime and immortal lustre; it is reflected from the spirit of a Channing, a Whitman, a Brownson, a Dewey, an Emerson, a Cranch, and a long list of kindred minds, who seem to be looking for something more spiritual, pure, and elevated than has ever yet been claimed for humanity. The rights of the soul, freedom of opinion, freedom of thought, and freedom of investigation are asserted, and the cry is Onward! That this movement will not only be onward but upward is the glad hope of many who are watching the course of events with the most intense anxiety.

I fear I have already trespassed too much on your time and patience, but I wish to communicate one idea which I do not recollect to have seen published, though it may be a familiar one to you. The advocates of vicarious sacrifice contend that the doctrine is necessary for the vindication of the divine character. God (say they) has made and proclaimed a law, and guarded it by sufficient penalties, and there is no way to maintain the honor of that law, but by the infliction of the penalty, either on the transgressor or a substitute. The idea which I would present is that the repentance and reformation of the transgressor is *per se* a sufficient vindication of the divine character. Man, by transgression, has said that the law was not good; but by repentance and reformation, he acknowledges his error. Can the infliction of the penalty in such case add anything to the honor of the lawgiver? The same individual who said the law was not good, when he becomes enlightened, declares that it is good. Can he do anything more, or will the infliction of the penalty add anything to the force of the acknowledgment, or brighten the evidence of the goodness and justice of the law-

giver before the rational intelligence of the universe ?

If you can make use of any part of my letter, for the advancement of the cause of liberal Christianity, you are perfectly welcome to do it. Though a private, inexperienced, and, you will perceive, uneducated individual, my name and influence, however humble, belong to the cause of truth and righteousness, and shall gladly be devoted to the best interests of men. The "Messenger" has made me acquainted with some of the master spirits of the age ; and though there is so great a disparity of intellect, the contact of mind has awakened sympathies which lead onward to the same noble purpose of action. I feel an interest in the cause for which they act, and would rejoice to do something for its advancement. May the blessings of Him who guides the destinies of the moral universe rest on their labor, and may you have the happiness to see the cause of truth triumph in every quarter, and your labors blessed abundantly.

Yours, in Christian love and fellowship,

A. H. C.

IV.

STUDENT.

“1840, *June* 25. Commenced study under the direction of Prof. Henry Ware, Jr., and took room No. 40, Divinity Hall. Attended Ware’s evening discussion.

“*July* 4. Attended the celebration in Boston, and visited Bunker Hill.

“*Sunday, Aug.* 9. United with Mr. Gray’s church in Bulfinch Street.

“*Dec.* 7. Received for sawing wood three dollars.

“1841, *May* 19. Read a report before the Philanthropic Society of the Divinity School on Western Missions.

“*June* 8. Was approved by the Cambridge Association as a minister of the gospel.

“*June* 27. Received ordination as an evangelist in Boston.

“From H. J. Huidekoper fifty dollars to

purchase books, and from the Divinity School the works of Dugald Stewart.

“*June 29.* Left Cambridge.

“*July 23.* Reached Chicago.”

This is the entire journal of the year at Cambridge as a student. Other notices of the time are not numerous, for a great body of closely-written notes of lectures and other college work of that sort, still remaining, must have taken up whatever time he had to spare; after the direct book-work for the day was done. Indeed, this appears from the few letters that still exist of this year. Informing his wife, to whom of course the first is written, that he had procured paper of the very largest size, so that he might be able to write a great deal for one postage, he writes his letter over and across, close and compacted, in about a week from the time he begins with “Dearest,” telling here and there, as he goes on, how tired he is to-night, or how late it is; but then how writing a bit more will refresh him better than his sleep.

It is evident that the year altogether was one of the very pleasantest in his whole life. It intro-

duced the young farmer to a new world. Cambridge, always the central point of vitality in the brain of the country, was then, with the society that surrounded it, the glass of its good-breeding, because good manners in the best sense are always nearest of kin to the good man. And President Quincy, Henry Ware, and others like them, were then among the great men who noticed, welcomed, assisted, and opened their homes to him. Indeed, it is clear that the difference between the ease and urbanity he noticed in the society he had entered, and what seemed so rustic and awkward in himself, came at last to oppress him. He speaks almost pathetically of the struggle he has to save himself from making bad blunders. I get the impression that he must have felt so constrained and awkward that the native dignity of Vermont and Illinois had but a very poor chance to show itself, and I heartily wish that some wise man could have guessed his secret, and then had the grace to say to him, "Young man, be yourself. You have in your own instinct to be a gentleman that which will do more for you than trying to copy what you see in others. Good-breeding is not to be learned from 'The

Whole Art of Politeness,' and is not being like another well-bred man ; but it is in the simple and sincere manliness you brought with you from the prairie, and the courtesy you always observed, without trying, toward your wife."

But in other ways, the society about him was full of power to help him. He rushed to hear the great preachers of the era ; and tells how "To-day I heard Mr. Putman ; he preached one of the very best sermons I ever heard in my life." Then again, "I have been to hear Dr. Beecher ; there must have been a thousand people present. I could agree heartily with the most of what he said ; he is rather a hard-featured old fellow, 'awful powerful,' as the Hoosiers say, and I thought if his pulpit cushions are not well stuffed, I should not like to lend him my fists to preach with." And then again, "I have attended Mr. Gannett's Lectures on the Doctrines. I suppose, taken altogether, they are the best things of the sort ever delivered on our side. They have created a wonderful excitement in Boston. The orthodox are thoroughly aroused by them, have got out their old creed in its most hideous form, and are trying to make the people swallow

it ; but they might as well try to make any man who has had the good fortune to hear these lectures swallow a chestnut burr. The lecturer has only a few notes, to which he will refer now and then ; but the lectures are given otherwise *extempore*, whilst the speaker is pacing up and down the platform, and the hearers are all on fire with his eloquence. Each lecture occupies about two hours in the delivery.”

And then he would not be a mere listener, but together with a fellow-student (Mr. Osgood), with whom he became very intimate, went to the House of Correction and prayed and labored with the inmates, whenever there was opportunity ; prepared and read his address on Western Missions ; gave addresses on Temperance here and there, and got some chances to preach beside in the churches.

Still another way opened to him. One day, soon after his commencement at Cambridge, a fellow-student carried him off to see a lady he was in the habit of visiting once a week, at least, for his own sake and for hers. She had been confined to her bed nine years ; had no father, mother, or kinsman living ; was entirely dependent on a

goodness that had never failed in those about her, but was so bright, cheerful, and well-informed as to the newest and freshest things in literature and life, kept up so wide a correspondence, and was altogether of so fine a nature, that it was a wonder to see and hear her. "There was no 'pious resignation,' or submission about her," the young student says; "she does not seem aware that there is room for such things in a life so blessed as hers has been. From where she is laid, she can see the trees and spires, and when she is not working at some small present for the friends who have been so good to her, she is reading, writing, or watching the world. The first two years, she says, were much longer than the whole seven that have come after; now she is as happy as the day is long."

The friend who carried Mr. Conant to this secluded "Salem" was about leaving Cambridge, and asked him to take his place. It was a most welcome request, and he gladly promised to go, with his shred of choice reading and ripple of pleasant talk, once a week, at least, to Miss Hershey's chamber. With how much blessing to him-

self only those who, like the writer of this memoir, have just such a privilege included in their round of pastoral or other duties can guess.

In the home of Miss Sarah Clarke, then planted near by, Mr. Conant was, also, always welcome, and he touches, here and there, in his letters, on bright minutes he had been spending looking at the pictures or talking; and here and there, we have hints how the simple observation of the good manners and grace there seemed to undo some awkward twist in himself, and make him feel wholly at ease and quiet. And all this, with rambles in the company of Student Osgood, and long talks of what they meant to do when once they were fairly launched on the great enterprise for which they were preparing, with glimpses at the sights of Boston, — among which sights were the steamer, “*Britannia*,” the first that ever crossed the Atlantic, and the great Whig procession, when a shoe came from Lynn with seventeen men in it, — this is what one gathers by glances along the student year.

Of the studies themselves, he writes one thing well worth reading. In a letter to Mrs. Conant, dated Nov. 10, 1840, he says, “I have

commenced the study of Greek. Do not be frightened; I shall not stay here any longer on that account. I only intend to lay a sort of foundation on which I may build hereafter. I do not mean to let it hinder any other study, and only take it as a change to rest my mind. My fellow-students assist me in it, and the opportunity is one I shall never have again; and as it is generally thought to be of so much importance for a minister to be able to read the New Testament in the original, perhaps I shall not regret the pains taken to learn it. Still, I have always been opposed to the study of these languages as a general thing. It is well for a few, who have the time to spare, to become thoroughly master of them, but to make the dead language an essential part of a general education, I have always considered to be a piece of folly and a waste of time. And were it not for the general opinion and prejudice of society, perhaps I should not have commenced the study at all; as it is, I shall keep it, like a dog under the table, to pick up the crumbs of time that might otherwise be lost."

It was heresy then to say this, but it was

prophecy, too, as is most heresy, and men of no mean repute are now repeating what was said so well twenty-five years ago by this farmer from the West. But it was hard work all through. "If Professor Ware did not encourage me to believe that I am doing very well," he writes, "I should be ready to give up in despair. It is so hard to teach an old dog new tricks." But, as we have seen by the journal, the year came to an end at last. The masters were satisfied and the longing of his soul was fulfilled in his ordination to the work of an evangelist.

CAMBRIDGE, Sept. 23, 1840.

MR. SCOTTO CLARKE, —

Dear Sir: Judging from the kind sympathy which you have manifested toward me, and the interest you have appeared to feel in the cause in which I am engaged, I suppose that a line from me at any convenient opportunity will not be wholly unacceptable. Your favor by Mr. Wilson was duly received, and I was very happy to hear that you had gained your health. I have seen Mr. J. F. Clarke since his return to Boston, and am very glad to hear of your religious pros-

perity, both in Geneva and in Chicago. It gives me the greatest pleasure to hear of the successful labors of others, in advancing the cause of rational religion, though I cannot yet lend the helping hand which I hope soon to be able to extend.

My present prospects are very favorable, and I have little doubt but that I shall be able to remain a year. Mr. Ware speaks very favorably of my improvement, else I should be almost discouraged. I fear I shall not be able to meet the expectations which my kind friends and benefactors have formed of my ability for usefulness; but as I have enlisted, I have only to press on and do the best I can. I feel a deep interest in the work, and if I can do anything effectual, I shall feel that I have not lived in vain. I am engaged as teacher in two Sunday-schools, where I wish to be a learner as well as teacher. I expect to visit my wife and friends in Vermont next month, and shall endeavor to say a few words to the people of my native town and vicinity on the subject of rational religion, as they have expressed a wish to have me preach to them while there. Mr. Harrington was ordained last evening at Federal Street Church, sermon by Mr. Putnam, ordain-

ing prayer by Dr. Ware ; but of these things Mr. Patten will inform you. I regret that I have not seen him yet, and I fear I shall not see him before he returns. Mr. Wilson is to hand him this letter. Give my best respects to your much esteemed family, to Mr. Buckingham, Esquire Miller, and all interested ; also express my sorrow for Mr. Buckingham's unfortunate sickness since his return, and believe me ever, sincerely yours,
AUGUSTUS H. CONANT.

(To his Wife.)

CAMBRIDGE, March 29, 1841.

Dearest : I have this afternoon received your kind letter, for which I have been watching the post-office more than a week. Perhaps I ought not to leave my study to write immediately, but I can hardly deny myself the privilege, after waiting so long. Though I have much to do, I cannot help thinking of you a great deal. I see nothing new or delightful without thinking instantly how glad I should be to have you present to share my happiness. When I walk out early in the morning, and climb the hills and look abroad over the beautiful scenery, and see the first rays of the rising sun reflected from the

glittering spires, that may be seen in every direction, pointing to heaven, I think of the delight you would feel to stand by me and survey the glorious scene ; and while the heart is so full of gratitude, and its offering of praise is ascending to Him who made all that is bright and beautiful, a prayer for the loved ones far away mingles with the morning songs, and a feeling of humble trust comes over the soul in connection with the thought that the same hand that unseals the eyelids of the morning on the Atlantic shores lifts its fair light upon the distant prairies of the West. The same kind Father that supplies my wants and guards my life watches over those who are dearest to my heart, and they are safe with him. It is a joyful service to worship God and offer to him the gratitude of a devout heart in his own fair temple when the breath of the morning arises, and from the flowers of spring the song of birds like choral symphonies from every valley and hill. It is not that nature is not beautiful, or that God is not good that we do not at all times delight in worship. It is because low aims and desires, unholy passions, selfishness, and sin darken the mind and hinder the holy

communion of the soul with truth and virtue. Oh if we could always keep our hearts pure, then would the light of a holy and heavenly joy ever fill our souls! "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Let us strive to become pure in heart, to make ourselves what we profess to be; and we shall then best secure the enjoyments which life can afford. If we can strengthen each other in spiritual things, then truly our union will be a happy one.

Tuesday Evening, 30th. I have just returned from a pleasant walk with my friend, Mr. Osgood, and were it not that my heart is with you, I suppose I should spend the evening with him or some other of my fellow-students. But in the midst of pleasant society, which I can enjoy but a few months more, I still think of you as my dearest earthly friend, and look anxiously forward to the time when you will share my walks and visit these scenes which are so familiar to me, and which are fixing a strong hold in my affections. Not that I am likely to become so much attached to Cambridge as to forget our Western home; but it is a delightful place, and I find so many kind friends that I look forward to

the time of leaving with pain as well as pleasure. The agreeable associations which I have already formed cannot be broken off without regret ; yet when I look westward, I long to return to my friends and the scenes of my labor, the field of my future toil and I hope usefulness. If I could have you and our little ones, and father and mother here, I should not want to leave my studies under two or three years. But I feel that in the present situation I should not be justified in remaining longer than the close of the present year. I have received a letter from Mr. Hosmer since my return, inquiring about my success, whether I wished to stay longer, etc. He expects to visit here in May or June to get the "pores of his spirit filled," as he says, "and see once more his native hills." I have to-day seen Mr. Nightingale, who, you will remember, preached in Chicago. Mr. Stone, who has been preaching in Wisconsin, is also in Cambridge. I am glad to learn that you find some time to study ; I wish you could have more, and more books also, but perhaps you have as many books as you can get along with. I feel sorry for those who are so much afraid of Unitarianism ; they must feel so bad to witness its

spread ; but it will not do to shut up the truth and hide the light because people are afraid of it, and would rather remain in error than be convinced contrary to their old prejudices. While I was in Vermont, I became more than ever convinced that Unitarianism was finding its way into the orthodox churches without their knowing it. There are so many cracks through the old walls of sectarianism that the light will shine in, and though some will choose to remain within as long as possible, and endeavor to stop the cracks with untempered mortar, it will not answer a great while. Calvinism has had its day, it was good in its place, but it belongs to a darker age, and cannot last forever. It is fast crumbling away, and will soon be reckoned among the errors of the past, the things that *were*, but *are not*. The hope that we may do something to spread the light of a purer and more rational and liberal faith, is sufficient to cheer us onward, and sustain us under the few trials we are called to endure. We know not how much we may accomplish if we are faithful, sincere, and true to our trust. If we improve the talents committed to us, they will be doubled, and our reward will be in proportion

to our faithfulness. How trifling will all the sacrifices which we make for religion appear to us when this world is fading from our view.

How rich and glorious the reward of all our toils for truth and holiness ! “ Soon,” as you say, “ the places that now know us will know us no more forever.” But not one good desire or holy purpose of our life will be forgotten by our heavenly Father. The sincere endeavor, however feeble, will meet his approval, and the most trifling service, performed through a sense of duty to him, will receive his merciful acceptance. A cup of cold water, given as a manifestation of love to Christ’s followers, will in no wise lose its reward. Let us, then, not complain of our sacrifices for the cause in which we are engaged. What are they to the sufferings of the martyrs of old ? We love each other, but this very affection is the gift of our Father in heaven ; we love our children, but they, too, are his gifts, and so are all the joys of life. Read the little tract I sent you of the slave mother, and contrast her lot with what you enjoy, and perhaps you will be ready to inquire, What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits ? Truly we have cause of

thankfulness, and when I think of my own sinfulness and neglect of duty, how little of true devotion and sincerity of soul I possess, in contrast with what I enjoy, I am filled with astonishment. Goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, and my unworthiness has not prevented the constant succession of favors. How illy have I deserved to occupy the high and holy station which I fill! I tremble to think of it, and can only trust that goodness, which has raised me up, to keep me from falling. Father, save me from pride, from ambition, from self-seeking and hypocrisy, and make me worthy of the station I fill.

Wednesday Morning, 31st. I have a moment which I usually devote to religious reading, which I will steal for you. It is a beautiful morning, and the old wish that you were here to enjoy it with me comes home again to my heart. But I doubt not you are enjoying it as well as myself. Perhaps while I am writing, you are preparing to visit the "Sugar Bush" and get a drink of sugar water, or pluck the first flowers of spring. Little John calls for his cap, and capers about with high glee. Hurrah, for a walk with his

mamma ! And how he laughs and jumps and chatters and points at everything that pleases him ! Do not spoil him with indulgence, or neglect him because you are busy ; watch the first unfolding of his mind more closely than you would the opening rosebud. It is a germ of immortality, shelter it from the chilling blasts of hatred and selfishness, and let the mild atmosphere of maternal affection infuse a pure and generous life into every holy principle of truth and purity and love that lies concealed in the expanding soul ; let him not be poisoned with flattery, or roused by either excessive fondness or excessive severity. Of the latter, however, there is little danger. There is danger of governing too much, but it is less common than governing too little. Never think you have little to do while you have the training of an immortal spirit. May God give us wisdom equal to our trust.

Thursday Morning, April 1. How swiftly time flies ! It is already the first of April. One fourth of the term is already gone, and I feel as if I had scarcely done anything yet. I must be more diligent. Last evening I listened to a report on Temperance, before the Philanthropic Society of

the Divinity School. The report was followed by several resolutions, which called forth an animated discussion on the wine question. There were several who plead for the use of wine, but their arguments were flimsy enough. It was some time before I could get an opportunity to speak, and I became so much excited, that when the opportunity offered, I poured forth my sentiments with an earnestness which I have never before manifested in this place. They must have thought that the Western spirit was up. I believe, however, that I did not say anything which, in my sober moments, I could not approve. I forgot everything but my subject, and perhaps spoke rather too loud some of the time; on the whole, I think that the winebibbers felt that they had the worst side to defend, and will probably hereafter take rather a different view of it. Dr. Ware is thorough-going in the cause, and related some anecdotes to show the evils of wine-drinking in Europe when he was there. I am very glad that you have quit tea-drinking. When we return to the West, we will set an example of cold-water principles, which will be consistent and worthy of imitation.

As I was passing along Washington Street, Boston, the other evening, I saw a large collection of human skulls placed before a window, samples of almost every race of the family of man. It was the *den* of a phrenologist. Besides all the real skulls, there were casts in plaster of heads of all kinds, and certificates from many learned men of the wonderful wisdom and skill of the gentleman who offered his services to the gentlemen and ladies of Boston in the line of his profession for fifty cents a head. Phrenological books and charts for sale, etc. Well, I ventured in to see what was going on. There was just beyond a curtain, that was partially drawn aside, a gentleman and lady, and near them the *phrenologist himself*, examining the head of a little girl. He soon finished his description of her mental development, and then the gentleman came forward and took his seat to have the wonderful propensities and powers of his physical, intellectual, and moral being disclosed. I called for a book and looked at it, listened, and peeped over it occasionally, to see what was going on. The chart of his cranium was soon made out, and then for the lady. But perhaps he would not like to have

strangers present when the secret propensities of her refined nature were unfolded, "Sir," says the phrenologist, turning to me, "do you wish to have your head examined?" as much as to say, "If you do not, you must leave the room, so as not to frighten the lady." I hesitated a moment, and then answered in the affirmative. "And now," said I, taking my seat, "no flattery; let out the whole secret, tell the worst."

"*Philoprogenitiveness enormous*; you will be likely to ruin your children, a high sense of honor, combativeness large, will be likely to knock down a man if he treads on your toes. Benevolence full, will pick him up and ask his pardon the next minute; a great reasoner, considerable mechanical skill, independent in opinion, fond of having your own way, great decision of character, and firmness of purpose. The highest regard for truth, parsimonious and saving, unalterable affection, enduring all things for love, but not likely to make a fool of yourself on account of the girls; little solicitude about religious matters, small degree of faith, want of credulity, keen perception of the beautiful, correct power of analyzing and criticising, without much deception, and not very witty," etc.

“Strange, what a character! So fond of children! Ha, ha!” said I, “don’t think I am more fond of my children than other men. True, I think a great deal of my wife, but never thought that I should spoil my children by indulgence; hardly love them enough.”

“Perhaps it is manifested in fondness for domestic animals, — dogs or horses. Not at all? Well, it is there, at any rate.” So you must watch that I do not spoil the children when I return.

I am expecting a letter from Illinois soon, and when I write again, I shall be able to give you some news from there. My health is good, and all goes on pleasantly. Mr. Ware expressed an ardent wish to see you, in Cambridge, which I hope will be gratified. I think it will be of more advantage to you than it would to walk on a *Turkey carpet*, or glitter in diamonds the rest of your life. The improvement of the mind is of more consequence than outward display, and the opportunity which a few weeks in this vicinity will afford will repay the expense of the journey with a liberal interest. I hope you will write immediately, when you re-

ceive this, as practice makes perfect in everything. It affords me a double satisfaction to find that you are doing so much for the cultivation of your own powers, while you are making me happy by the account of what you are doing, how you enjoy yourself, etc. Give my love to all, without thinking that you can rob yourself.

Your ever affectionate husband,

AUGUSTUS H. CONANT.

CAMBRIDGE, June 7, 1841.

DEAR SISTER, — I have been thinking that I should like in some way to give expression to a brother's love other than in words, and leave you something for a remembrance, though it would be but a trifle. I know of scarcely anything which I think more valuable than a well-selected family library; and though my opportunity for reading has not been very great, I might be able to select a few books which would be valuable, both to you and your children, and a few books well read are always better than a great amount of trash. If, therefore, you will trust me to select for you, I will make you welcome to my service, and to what is due me from Harris, pro-

vided he can get the money, and send it to me in season to purchase the books before I leave here. The note amounts to twenty-seven dollars and sixty-eight cents ; and if he is disposed to add a few dollars so as to make up thirty dollars or more, I should have no objection. I expect my wife will start for Cambridge the 18th or 21st, and if you can send the money by her, it will be the best way ; but if you should fail of it, you may send it by mail, but not after the 24th, as it would be too late for me to attend to it. I need not say that if anything is done, it must be done quickly. My time is very much occupied ; I frequently do not get more than four hours' sleep out of the twenty-four. I have a vast deal to do here, and but a short time to do it. Yesterday, I gave a Sunday-school address at Cambridgeport, heard two sermons, preached once myself at South Boston, and attended church meeting in the evening ; and I say to you, what I should not like to say to others, that I have very good success in *extempore* speaking, and receive many expressions of commendation and encouragement from those in whom I have the greatest confidence. God has blessed me in everything ; my hopes are

high. Pray for me, sister, that I may be *humble*, true, and devout; that I may rise above selfishness and vain ambition, and seek to be myself the example of what I preach.

My love to you, and all that are dear to you.

In haste, your brother,

AUGUSTUS H. CONANT.

V.

SECULAR BUT SACRED.

THE missionary efforts of the faith which Mr. Conant was now ordained to preach in the West began in 1826 with the formation of the American Unitarian Association.

In April of that year, a man was sent West from this society, apparently to spy out the land, and then come back and report. Starting from Boston, he went by the way of Philadelphia to Harrisburg, where he found a society resolved on building a church; thence to Northumberland, where he found a church, but wondered how the preacher could stay there, when he had talents that would support him handsomely in New England. He went on then to Pittsburg, where he found a society stronger than that which gathers there now, after forty-two years. Westward from Pittsburg, he went into Ohio, where he found the "Christian" de-

nomination quite strong. He was attending one of their meetings, when a venerable preacher walked in, with his Bible and hymn-book nicely wrapped in a piece of deer skin, and gave the people a prayer an hour long and a sermon nearly three. Here our missionary distributed some tracts, as indeed he did wherever he went, if he thought they would be welcome.

In Cincinnati, he found a number of persons of our faith anxious to start a church. In Louisville and at St. Louis, there was the same anxiety; of the latter place he says, "A church here may include some of the best citizens, if the right man will go there; but should the preacher in his zeal hold meetings in the market-place, or under the shade of a tree, he will fail to do the good he might do with more prudence."

After this, he visited and inspected the interesting social experiment at Harmony, and found the cornfields and vineyards overrun with weeds, the fine church turned into a workshop, and the socialists hard at *work* playing ball, while everything about the place gave signs of an impending crisis. In another place he strayed into a prayer-meeting, in which one man was praying

and the rest shouting, laughing, groaning, and weeping, "until," he says, "deafened by their clamor, and disgusted with their worship, I had to get away."

And so it came to pass, at last, that our missionary arrived safe back again in Boston, after an absence of five months, in which he visited twelve States, and travelled fifteen hundred miles through all the pleasant summer days of 1826.

But in the report from which I have drawn these notes, there is one very notable feature, perhaps unparalleled in missionary annals. In this long journey of five months, going through twelve States and eighty-eight counties, there is no mention made that this apostle in all that time preached a single sermon. It is a sad report to read. Nothing can exceed the decorum and good taste of everything the good man did. *He* never stood in the market-place nor under a spreading tree with his heart so full of the Word of Life that he must speak, whether the West would bear or forbear; but one of those shouting Methodists, at whose conduct he had felt such disgust, would have done it, though the result had been a coat of tar and feathers; and it

is equally curious to notice that when he made this report of his services, no man seems to have felt that he had not done his whole duty.

Better things, however, were speedily to follow. Next year John Pierpont bore his great, burning heart into Ohio, Kentucky, and Missouri, proclaiming the glad tidings, and societies were started in Louisville and Cincinnati. In 1834 William G. Eliot went to St. Louis, and George W. Hosmer to Buffalo in 1836. In 1833 James Freeman Clarke went to Louisville, where, not content with preaching only, he started the "Western Messenger," a magazine still quite valuable for some of its papers, and curious, as the medium through which some of Emerson's finest poems first saw the light. All these men also acted as missionaries to the country about their stations, and it was in one of these raids, as we have seen, that George W. Hosmer came to Chicago, where Mr. Conant heard him, and was led, thereby, into the way of life, went to Cambridge, and, returning at the end of a year, prepared to fall into line with the devoted little band that, in this new country, were working the work of Him who sent them.

The centre of the work Mr. Conant was destined to do in the West was the then very small settlement of Geneva, on the Fox River. The leading men and women in the place were from New England, and among these were some from the West Church in Boston, who could not be satisfied with such preaching as was commonly heard in the new country; they longed to hear once again the truth with which good Dr. Lowell had made them glad, just as a Scotsman longs to hear a skylark.

Mr. Conant went there first to preach in 1839 while still a farmer. The friends who heard him still remember his first appearance, and that they supposed he was a new settler come in to borrow a few bushels of corn, or to make a trade. It was a welcome surprise to find that he had come not to get bread from them, but to bring them the bread of life.

He was quaintly dressed, they say, and did not promise much at the first glance. I suppose he was not a bit like Dr. Lowell, but when he had once preached to them, they felt it was all right, recognized the fine soul under the queer garb, made him welcome with all their hearts, and in-

vited him to come again ; and so, when he came back from Cambridge, it was the most natural thing in the world that he should be their minister and settle among them for good. It was at once the need of the place and the wish of the man, however, that he should come as a missionary not to Geneva only, but to the whole country round about ; that was what he wanted to do, what his heart bounded at, for it was his meat and drink, and psalm and prayer, and faith and hope, that he might go far and wide, bearing the gospel of peace.

Still in Geneva, where the work was to find its natural centre, there was hesitation, difficulty, and doubt. Mr. Conant began to preach there on the 1st of August, 1841, but on the 8th of May, 1842, he writes, "We had our first meeting to-day, on the subject of forming a religious society in Geneva, but there was a doubt as to whether the right time had come to begin, and a declaration of principles that had been circulated and signed by twenty persons was reserved for further consideration." A month after this, however, the new society was organized as the first Christian society of Geneva. Very

few were present at the meeting, and the prospect was still dubious, but there was life at the heart of the movement, and that is always the main thing, so Mr. Conant was chosen pastor ; Samuel Clarke and Scotto Clarke, assistant teachers ; James Sterling, Amasa White, and Jonas Carr, trustees ; Charles Patton, treasurer, and F. Whiting, secretary.

Then it soon began to be clear that they must have a meeting-house. The school-house in which they met was a very poor place, not easy to come at, not easy to warm in winter, and to meet there was like flying with a broken wing. There has been a good deal said about churches in destitute places ; in one sort of destitute place a church is just as sure to be built as birds' nests are, and that is where the destitution is felt by those who live there. It was felt in Geneva, and so the church was a foregone conclusion ; it was built in the hearts of the little band of worshippers first, and then the stone and lime and lumber followed, as the effect a cause.

Miss Patton, a most devoted friend of the society, returning to Roxbury from a visit in the West, interested many friends there and in Boston

to help build a church in Geneva. They started a fair, at which a very handsome sum was realized and sent out. This, with what the society could give beside in money, materials, and labor, put up a church, which was opened in January, 1844, when Mr. Conant preached the sermon, Mr. Harrington, of Chicago, offered the prayer of dedication; Eben Conant wrote an original hymn for it, and various Christian elders, with Arthur B. Fuller, then teaching school at Belvidere, took the rest of the service. From this time the cause in Geneva was sure of its footing. The Association in Boston gave generously to support the preacher, sent books and tracts without stint, had a warm regard always for the young church, and did for it all that was noble and good.

The life of a minister is generally uneventful. It is sometimes identified with the most sublime, or awful, or romantic, or pathetic incidents; it offers examples that are among the grandest the world has ever seen of human character; it is able to point to those that are "foremost of the sons of light" among its most illustrious names, but for all that, the majority of those that follow

this calling must be content with a very quiet and commonplace obscurity. This, on the whole, is to be Mr. Conant's lot during his ministry of sixteen years in Geneva. Devoted to his work with a singular and entirely unselfish devotion, and doing more hard work than most men do in it, his best claim to our regard lies first in the breadth and deepness of the sympathies, and then in the full-handed industry with which his work was done.

He has left journals of these years in a great profusion. They are far too ample to be printed in this small volume, but I will give such parts of them as tell his story better than I could tell it, only drawing the lines he himself has drawn, by giving first, from one journal, what will show how his life went on in Geneva, while he held, as it were, the pioneer's axe in one hand and the Bible in the other, doing a man's work with both; and then in another chapter some account of his work as a missionary: —

“ 1842, *Jan.* 7. Removed to Geneva.

“ Wrote on a sermon, and made a door.

“ Repaired our room. Worked at a sermon.
Doctored sore eyes.

“ Raised the house frame.

“ Cut and drew ice, and made curtain rods.

“ Made a plan of a sermon on the prodigal son,
a pair of quilting frames, and an argument at the
Lyceum against capital punishment.

“ Read Neander. Made a chair.

“ Worked on a sermon. Drew straw.

“ Worked on a sermon. Made a partition for
the stable.

“ Worked on a sermon, and drew wood. Snow
two feet deep.

“ Commenced a sermon, and worked in the
woods.

“ Doctored sick horse. Cut wood.

“ Read Neander. Horse died.

“ Read Neander. Mended a pump.

“ Wrote on a sermon, read Neander, and made
a wheelbarrow.

“ Read Bushnell. Drew out manure.

“ Began a sermon. Planted potatoes.

“ Wrote a sermon on Episcopacy. Built an
ice-house.

“ Read the Methodist Discipline. Helped my wife to wash.

“ Planted potatoes. Wrote a sermon on Unitarianism.

“ Worked on a sermon. Made benches for the school.

“ Finished sermon, and haying.

“ Wrote a sermon. Set out plum-trees.

“ Planned a sermon. Made a gravel walk.

“ Wrote at a sermon. Papered my study.

“ Wrote at a sermon. Planted seventy peach-trees.

“ Finished sermon. Made soap.

“ Wrote at a sermon. Made window-frames for Richard Moore.

“ Wrote sermon. Planted onions.

“ Planned a sermon. Made a bedstead for the cobbler.

“ 1849, *Nov.* 21. Went to Elgin with father, to build a cupola for the church.

“ 22. Worked at cupola.

“ 23. Raised cupola.

“ 24. Hung the bell.

“ 25. Preached in the church.

“ 26. Finished the cupola, and went home.

“ Wrote a sermon. Repaired a wagon.

“ Read Milman. Planted raspberries.

“ Wrote a sermon. Plastered the cellar-floor.

“ Read Macaulay. Made candles.

“ 1850, *Sept.* 12. Railroad train came into Geneva for the first time.”

This is the plan of what may be called the journal of a working man. The record stretches from Jan. 1, 1842, to Dec. 6, 1853, and then ends. There would be no additional interest in printing the whole ; what is given here is a fair sample, and is far too characteristic of the man to be omitted, and I think we cannot afford to lose this revelation of the way in which all things worked together about the little parsonage when the parson could be at his post. Soap and sermons, the Methodist Discipline, and washing-day, Episcopacy and an ice-house, Macaulay and candles, Neander and a wheelbarrow, the study and the stable, a course of lectures on the sects, and a bedstead for the lame cobbler, — a journal like this is only possible of the life of a man as honest as he was, and in earnest, living on the frontier, and capable of turning his hand to

anything. There are, of course, many days in which the work done is altogether secular, when the man is out of doors hammering away at something from daylight till dark. Then he is whole days in the study with his books and at his desk. Now he is in the fields and woods, and then in the garden and the workshop. But what the journal *never* yields in these twelve years is a single line to tell of a single moment devoted to dismal speculations about the universe, or to grumbling because things did not go as well as the writer expected. There is no sign of a blue Monday, or a feverish Saturday. I sit with this journal of days' works before me, written with the most abominable ink (home made, I guess), and there still seems to be a voice crying out of the homely old book to the recording angel, Write, for these things *are* faithful and true. They are better than the writer ever seems to guess; the hand that is writing is only half conscious of what it writes about; the right hand does *not* know what the left hand doeth.

One brief entry, for instance, is of a bedstead made for the cobbler. There are other places in which this time-honored person figures in the

same obscure way, and these lines are but the ciphers of as noble and touching a thing as ever was done by a man in Mr. Conant's position. The cobbler was a cripple, and wofully helpless and poor, when he came to the place; he could mend shoes if he had a room to live in, but he had no possibility of getting one. This minister of the gospel could not afford to go distracted about that, or to put the man off with a dollar and send him about his — starvation, so he built a place for him entirely with his own hands, furnished it in the same way, and started the old cripple on his way of life rejoicing. He got him all the wood he wanted, too, for the winter, sawed, split, and piled it for him, got in provision for him, drove the wolf once for all from the door, and the result was the happiest cobbler in Kane County, with not a doubt in his heart for evermore about the truth of this *liberal* Christianity. Mr. Conant held on to the man after that, until the angels got him. And this was but one instance of the endeavor he made constantly to grapple hand to hand and foot to foot with things about which most of us feel but little personal concern, because to this man at work

in Geneva, the simplest and most common duty touched at once his own heart, and the heart of the Christian faith. He was as quick to leap to the appeal of a crippled cobbler, and as strong to save him, as if the Master had come out of heaven to bid him do it, and had told him he should have for his deed an endless renown, and the praises of all the choirs of heaven.

VI.

MISSIONARY.

THE field stretching away from Geneva was ample enough for a host of missionaries, who should have no other work to do but go out and preach the gospel to every creature.

But the chapter just read of the life of a working man has told us something about what Mr. Conant had to do in providing for his own household before he could begin to venture abroad at all. How he did go out, and what came of his apostolic journeys, his journal must again inform us, but, as in the previous chapter, only by its essence and spirit, by the extract, if it can be made, of his whole missionary life. Then the chapter that will follow this on the Preacher and Pastor will complete my record of his life at Geneva, and the whole will be clearer, I trust, done in this way than if I had made of the sixteen years just a chronological jumble. His whole life at Geneva

was a threefold cord which cannot be broken, but as the strands of it are so different in their nature, I have thought it would be most instructive to look at each strand separately, point out its quality, and then let the whole strong cable by which this man was so fastened to his fellow-men, and to God, abide in its simple and beautiful perfection.

“1841. Commenced preaching in Geneva on my return from Cambridge. From the 20th to the 28th made a journey to the North-West, preaching at Rockford, Oregon City, and Belvidere.

“*Oct.* 14. Went to Joliet, preached four sermons, and visited the people.

• “*Nov.* 10. Preached at Blackberry. Met some “Christian” preachers there, and arranged with them to unite our labors.

“*Nov.* 14. Went to Joliet, but met with only poor encouragement.

“*Nov.* 21. Preached at Blackberry, where I baptized my wife and Fayette Churchill.

“*Dec.* 24 to the end of the year. Went into Wisconsin Territory, preaching at Burlington,

Spring Prairie, Gardiner's Prairie, Rochester, and Montalana.

"1842, *Jan.* 3. Attended Quarterly Conference at Montalana.

"16. Preached at Rock Creek.

"30. Preached at Batavia. Found great prejudice about us there.

"*Feb.* 26. Preached at St. Charles in the new Universalist meeting-house to a good audience.

"*April* 3. Attended Christian Conference at Rhillbuck Creek.

"10. Preached at Sugar Grove.

"14 to 20. Went into Wisconsin, preaching as I found opportunity.

"*Aug.* 1. One year since I returned from Cambridge. During the year I find I have travelled as a missionary 1,844 miles, distributed 150 volumes of books and 1,000 tracts.

"*Oct.* 9. Preached for the first time at Warrenville. The Baptist church there is the largest in the Western country, and includes most of the inhabitants of the village, very jealous of Unitarianism, but some are anxious to hear.

"1843, *Jan.* 17. Lectured at Naperville on

the Evidences of Christianity, and the Causes of Modern Unbelief.

“*March 1.* Lectured at Batavia on the Trinity.

“*March 28 to April 5.* Went into Wisconsin, preaching in Burlington, then in McHenry. Found great interest in our ideas.

“*April 30.* Preached in Chicago.

“*May 14.* Preached at Rock Creek, Sugar Grove, and Aurora.

“*July 1, 2, 3.* Held general meeting at Geneva. Five elders of Christian body present. Baptized J. S. Wheeler in the Fox River, and addressed the people from the water, on the nature and importance of the ordinance. Great interest felt.

“*Aug. 13.* Preached in Chicago.

“*13 to Sept. 3.* Went North, preaching at Wheeling, Elgin, Dundee, Silver Creek, and other places.

“*Dec. 10 to 15.* Attended general meeting at Joliet, lecturing on the Atonement, the Trinity, Practical Christianity, and Dec. 30 and 31 attended general meeting at Warrenville.

“1844, *April 2 to 16.* Went into Wisconsin, preaching at Dundee, Solan, Little Prairie, Bur-

lington, Milwaukie, attending also the Christian Conference, where Brother Bristol was tried, found guilty of immorality, and turned out of the connection.

“*May 26.* Attended a yearly meeting of the Disciples at Naperville, but found them full of prejudice against us.

“*June 9.* Preached at Belvidere on the Trinity, and on the Doctrine of Election. The Baptist minister thereupon began a course of lectures on Bible Doctrine, but then left that and went on to show that Unitarians are German Rationalists and infidels, denying the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. He said the discourse of Theodore Parker at the ordination of Mr. Shackford in South Boston represented the sentiments of the Unitarian clergy in Boston in 1841!! I replied, defending our views as well as I could, and, the result was that quite a number embraced them.

“*July 15 to Aug. 15.* Went to St. Louis, Quincy, Warsaw, Burlington, Rock Island, and Galena. Mormonism and politics, I found were the great and absorbing topics, so that I did not get good attention. Joseph Smith, the Mormon

prophet, had just been killed by a mob. I visited Nauvoo, and spent three days with his family.”

So runs the record of the missionary life of Mr. Conant to the end. From about this time to June, 1845, he went regularly to Belvidere, and made that a second parish, but at last found that the distance was too great to permit him to go on with his pastorship there, so that the work had to be taken up by another man. After this, he went on a journey through the Rock River country, in which, at Como, he found ten Unitarian families. Then he preached regularly in Elgin for a long while, making that a second parish, — going also to Joliet, Belvidere, and many other places with his word of life and tracts and books.

In Elgin, April 5, 1846, he organized a free Christian congregation of twenty members, in which every member is left to the free exercise of his own understanding and conscience.

April 27th of this year he started for New England to attend the anniversaries, preaching on his way twice in New York on the Wants of the West. In New England, also, he preached in a number of places on the Wants of the West,

and received a great welcome. Collections were made, interest was aroused, his hands and his heart were full, and altogether he had a great time.

Returning to the West by way of his old home in Brandon, he was able to preach there in the church good John Conant had done so much to build up, and where the preacher himself had attended as a child, and as a young man had been admitted a member. It was a great day for him, as we may well believe. On the 27th of the month he was safe at home again.

But soon after this the young apostle began to feel that there was a limit even to his endurance. Out in all weathers where as yet railroads were below the Eastern horizon, taking the pot-luck of the frontiers as to his food, and his chance as to sleeping, whenever he wandered away from the cosey parsonage in Geneva, with all the work of heart and brain which he had to do, and with a constant anxiety about some of his missionary stations, — all this at last broke him down, so that for a while he could only attend to his two widely separated parishes of Geneva and Elgin, regretting all the while that

he could do but little more. Before the end of 1847, however, he was at work as hard as ever, baptizing by immersion, or affusion, as the folks prefer, organizing in Como, preaching in Dixon, and Aurora, and distributing books and tracts everywhere.

1843, on the 19th of January, he was able to open his new meeting-house in Elgin, toward which he had given two hundred dollars of the money raised in New England, when he was there, and Elgin rose to the dignity of providing him a "*regular*" salary of from one hundred and twenty-five dollars to one hundred and fifty dollars per annum for one service each Sunday. In the June of this year he was in Indiana, preaching and distributing books without stint. At Cole Creek in this journey he met a Christian elder, James McKinney, who told him that he had the highest salary of any man of their denomination about there; for whereas the rest did not average more than twenty-five dollars a year, he had twenty-nine dollars and thirty-nine cents!

In the May of 1849 he went again to Boston, preaching and speaking on the Needs of the West at the anniversaries, collecting books and

money, also, wherever there was a chance. In this visit James Freeman Clarke, who had heard how Mr. Conant, the winter before, had lost his horse, slipped into his hands the money to buy another. Cyrus Bartol bade him go into his library and take what books he wanted. Other friends remembered the wife and children. Everybody was glad to see and hear him, and on his way home, by way of Brandon once more, he preached in the town-hall on the sect everywhere spoken against, from which I fear good John Conant's church had been refused him this time. Still when we remember how a sense of the courtesies due to the place and the preacher acts on all preachers when they stand in another man's pulpit, we need not feel sorry that Mr. Conant, for once in his old town, could let the word have free course and be glorified.

Jan. 3, 1850, he writes, "It is now the beginning of the last half of the nineteenth century. How much is to be done in this field of labor to which I am called! I would be a more faithful and a better, that I may be a more useful man. O my Father, help me."

In 1850, I find Mr. Conant preaching regularly

at Geneva and Elgin, and beside that at a school-house on the prairie on his way between the two parishes, preaching beside this in St. Charles, Rock River Grove, and at other places, and distributing his beloved books^s wherever he went.

In 1851, in addition to his other work, he went to Meadville to commencement, to Detroit to Mr. Mumford's ordination, and to Chicago to preach for the Rev. Mr. Skinner, Universalist. He notes that there seems to be in this denomination a tendency to a catholic spirit which ought by all means to be met with sympathy on our part. Then there were ministers' meetings here and there, at which sermons were read and things said about the common faith and work that sent everybody home with a new glow of devotion.

May 17, 1852, he went to Cincinnati, to help organize the Western Unitarian Conference, and met W. G. Eliot, A. B. Fuller, R. R. Shippen, T. J. Mumford, Rev. Mr. Boyer, of Connelton, Messrs. Heywood and Harlowe, Livermore and Webster, DeLange and Clarke, Huidekoper and Hosmer, and a great number more belonging to the West, and Dr. Briggs, Dr. Lothrop, and Dr. Ellis, from Boston.

And so it would be very pleasant, if life was long enough, to read every word of these old journals down to the last entry.

June 20, 1857, he tells us that for sixteen years, wanting three Sabbaths, he has been preaching in Geneva, has formed many tender ties, but now feels that it is his duty to leave them. How the duty came to be clear to him, I must tell in another chapter. This is a very brief record of a duty done for the whole land about him. When St. Francis Xavier lay dying, his only cry was *Amplius, Amplius*, — Farther, farther yet, — as if the whole East was too small for him. This man, as he tells this story of his missionary labors, seems, as he is living through these years, always to be devoured by the same hunger for the conquest to God of the West. He would, had his power been equal to his zeal, have won it all. This record amply shows that he did what he could, desiring always to come to that noble consummation of the good old hymn : —

“My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.”

VII.

PREACHER AND PASTOR.

EVERY wise minister gives the best he has, first, to his own congregation. Those that the Father has given him, and who have come to him, he can in no wise cast out from the first place in his heart and mind. Sermons, sympathies, forethought, reflection, he garners and uses in that small corner of the field he has to care for. When it is otherwise, it is doubtful whether he should have a corner. The people will only take chaff from their pastor when they know he has not wasted the wheat, or sold it in another market. It is always hard for a flock to hunger and not be fed; but if there be an undertone that seems to say, "You see I have nothing to-day that will feed you. I tried hard to get something, but failed, and while you hunger, I faint," there may be patience in the people to wait for better things, but only when they are sure the best that could be

has been done. I suppose Mr. Conant guessed this at once, and so he made it the rule of his ministry that, whatever he might do beside, the best he had should be given first to Geneva. That was the Bethany where those lived he loved best, where he rested, and was cared for by good hearts and ready hands. The readers of this book are not, therefore, to imagine that the preacher and pastor was merely the shadow of the working man and missionary. This outside work was but the setting of the gem.

It is clear, also, that the minister had the insight to perceive which of these offices of the pastor and preacher should take the greatest place. He did not believe that to be a good pastor is any excuse for being a poor preacher. The easy paths of pastoral gossip into which so many men are allured never attracted him away from the more trying and exhausting work of the study. He felt what we should all feel, that in the cure of souls the pastor, if he be wise and tender, may be a good nurse; but the preacher, if he be strong and true, is a good physician.

And so it was that, though Mr. Conant never grew to be what is called an eloquent or popular

preacher, because some peculiarities in manner and voice in a measure prevented that, no man ever tried harder than he did to be a strong and true preacher, so he was in the best sense a good preacher, growing better to the end. This makes the mere titles and subjects of his sermons a most interesting study. I feel, as I read them, as if I am with him, watching how he lays out his work, and how he goes into it resolute, please God, to make it as good as possible. How he perceives that no mere hash of negations, with texts for salt and sarcasms for pepper, can ever bring men to feel the powers of the world to come. He must *study* to approve himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, and if he will not study, then sooner or later ashamed he must be.

A great many of his sermons, therefore, as will be seen in what he says about ten years of his ministry, in the sermon annexed to this chapter, are the strongest and stoutest affirmations he can make of the Fatherhood and love and goodness and wisdom and power of God.

Then there are numbers on the brotherhood of Jesus Christ and of men, of the worthiness of

the worst for this brotherhood, of the final and certain salvation of all men, and the certainty that all things are now working together to that end.

Earnest, strong, and tender sermons then come, on the curse and baleful blight of sin, on the beauty of and need for holiness, and all the great lines of personal conduct in its relation to the higher life. Then there are special courses of sermons and lectures on the relation of science to religion, on inspiration and many other aspects of the Bible question, on the Sects and Churches of Christendom, their Nature and Uses, The Signs of the Times, The Manliness demanded *by* the Times, and other courses demanding at once close reading, and that the preacher shall be wide awake to what is passing about him. He would touch, also, those deep and awful or tender and high subjects that we all find we have to speak about, — The Nature of Evil and the Good of it, wherever Evil is not also Sin. Sleep and Death. Little Children taken into the Arms of Christ. Jesus weeping. Jesus washing Feet. The Cup of Cold Water. Paul kneeling with his Friends on the Sea-shore. Then

he would get close to the common things of our life, and light them up afresh, — when he preaches on The Duty of loving Money. The Need and Joy of Labor. The Use of Railroads to Religion. The Religion of Prompt Payment. The True Art of Living, and so on. Finally, there were sermons not a few on the themes that then tried the souls of men, and were the tests of the faithful preacher, above all others, — The Sin and Curse of Human Slavery. The Wick- edness of any Contempt for Humanity. Con- servatism and Christianity. Christian Democ- racy. Education. Intemperance. The Liquor Trade, and every other object and aspect of re- form. Mr. Conant grappled as well as he could with all these questions. The one cry of his heart from week to week seems to have been, What must I say on Sunday that my people need most to hear? for that I must take for my sub- ject, and leave the rest to God. Then he said the thing that was in him with all his might, as one that must give an account for every *idle* word in the day of judgment; and that was his plan and endeavor as a preacher.

As a pastor in Geneva, Mr. Conant can only

be measured by what has been said already, and by what we know of the life of every minister who has his lot in a small country town. In such a town as Geneva especially, composed, as it was in those days, of healthy, hearty people, there is but little pastoral work to do. In the first ten years of his pastorate there were two deaths of adults in his society, and in that time he attended only five funerals of adults in the whole town, while the number of men, women, and children at whose funerals he was present through the whole country was only thirty-eight. In this time he had fifty-six marriages. What school celebrations, lectures, addresses, and other "public occasions" caught him up, and made him speak, I have no time or space to tell, but will close this chapter with what is better than anything I could say, from the pen of his old and fast friend and constant church-member, Judge Wilson, of Geneva, to whom I am indebted for many hints in the brief study I have made: —

"There was something about Mr. Conant that drew you irresistibly toward him. We never

thought of treating him as a pastor with any reserve or ceremony. When he entered our houses, he seemed always as one of the family, from whom we would no more conceal anything than we would from any other member of the household. He took the same interest in our domestic affairs as he did in his own, and so did we in his.

“ This made him a charming pastor. Our joys were his joys, and his were ours. He had, moreover, a habit of dropping in at any hour in the day, without the least ceremony, to tell something he had been reading, or consult about some new project, and these brief calls were like sunbeams. There was such a combination of frankness, sympathy, and sincerity in his nature that it was impossible for those who knew him well not to love him. If an unkind word escaped his lips, he never rested until he had made threefold reparation. In serious evils and trials, he was always observed to be undisturbed and patient. Failures and disappointments that would have discouraged most men only inspired our pastor with new energy and zeal. Years after the most of his co-workers in the West had disappeared, he still

stood at his post faithfully, and kept right on working with all his heart.”

But the end of these pleasant, hard, earnest, joyful days in Geneva came at last. I will not interfere with Mr. Conant's own account of the termination of his ministry as it is written in his journal. It is, in its brief way, a contribution to the history of the Christian Church of the time, and so reads to us a grave lesson we cannot afford to ignore. And then in the days that are opening for our country these records of stout and steadfast nonconformity will be gathered up as very precious things, to encourage men afresh to stand up for the right, though every tie and the heart-strings beside, be broken in the strife. The journal says, July 24, 1856, —

“ Attended the funeral of Brother S. N. Clarke, my Sunday-school superintendent, and *my very intimate and dear friend*. The loss to me and to the society in the death of Mr. Clarke is unspeakable. He was a model of manly and Christian excellence, whose life was a benediction, and whose presence made earth more like heaven.”

And then June 20, 1857, this comes : —

“ Since the above record, I have passed through many trials as a Christian minister, some of the severest growing out of my preaching against slavery in opposition to the prejudices and wishes of a portion of the society. The disaffection has been so great that the congregation has been considerably diminished, and my hopes of usefulness in Geneva greatly reduced. Old and leading members of the society have expressed so much dislike to anti-slavery preaching, and I became so much disheartened, that some three months ago I promised them if the condition of this society did not assume a more favorable aspect in six months, I would resign my pulpit.

“ On the 10th instant, I received, quite unexpectedly, a unanimous call to become pastor of the Unitarian society in Rockford, and have accepted the same, and expect to close my connection with this society the first Sunday in July.

“ For sixteen years, wanting three Sabbaths, I have been preaching in Geneva, and have formed many tender ties. But it seems to me now a clear case of duty to leave them, and most fervently do I commend them to the favor of God.”

July 20th, 1851, Mr. Conant preached this sermon. I have felt it must be printed because it is the man's own modest summary, up to date, of what I have tried to tell of his work as preacher and pastor, and is the best possible supplement to a chapter that would be quite incomplete without it:—

“Give an account of thy stewardship.”—LUKE xvi. 3.

This afternoon completes my term of service as a Christian minister in this place for ten years. Such a period is no inconsiderable portion of human life. We can hardly look back without some serious reflections upon its changing scenes and interesting events, or upon the manner in which we have been doing our work of life.

It may be recollected by some who were here at the commencement of my ministry that I proposed ten years' labor here as an experiment by which I might judge of the prospect of accomplishing a sufficient amount of good to justify my remaining longer. The declaration of such a purpose was made to remove an impression which prevailed that our efforts were transient, and would soon be abandoned. Through the permission and blessing of Divine Providence, the

purpose thus declared has been accomplished. The ten years have passed,—the experiment has been made,—the time for looking at our labor and its results has come.

And I would now invite your attention,—

I. To the religious condition of things at the time of my coming.

II. To what have been the leading objects of my ministry.

III. The methods.

IV. The results.

When I commenced preaching here after my return from Cambridge, there was no religious society in existence, and no regular public worship was maintained in the village.

Elder John Walworth had been preaching a part of the time the preceding year; the Methodist ministers on the circuit had sometimes preached here, but for want of encouragement had abandoned the place; there had been also Episcopal and Presbyterian and Baptist preaching, and I was informed that there had been as many as ten unsuccessful attempts made by ministers of one religious denomination or another to sustain worship or establish a society in the place.

The moral and religious reputation of the village was low ; intemperance, profanity, and disregard for the Sabbath were characteristic of Geneva in 1841.

There was one star of hope in this night of moral darkness ; it was the Geneva Sunday-school.

A young man from Cambridge University had settled in the place, and engaged in the duties of the legal profession. Seeing the exposed moral condition of the children of the village, he engaged the assistance of a few friends and opened a Sunday-school. Fearless of the ridicule that might be cast upon his enterprise, and faithful to his high convictions of duty, from Sabbath to Sabbath, while no religious society existed, and no other worship was held, he gathered his little company of children together to impart to them ideas of God and Christ and eternal life, and to endeavor to lead them into the paths of virtue and religion. On my first visit to Geneva in 1840, I found him thus employed, but before my return from Cambridge and the commencement of my ministry here he had been called by the providence of God to a higher sphere, and his

Sunday-school was left to be sustained by other hands and hearts. His dust hallows our burial-ground, and the name of Caleb A. Buckingham is and will be hallowed in the hearts of that band of teachers who were associated with him, and will in many others who knew him kindle emotions of reverence for moral worth, and gratitude for the exhibition of a pure and cheerful and benevolent faith in a consistent life, while our early history shall remain. The Sunday-school and the efforts put forth in establishing and sustaining it were the most hopeful appearances of moral and religious life and progress in the place. One thing there was to commend it to the consideration of a Christian minister, — *there was great need of this kind of work.* For my own encouragement, and as an indication that it might be my appropriate sphere of labor, the Sunday-school had been started and was sustained chiefly by those of the same denominational faith. A few Unitarians were here, and they were anxious to have a minister, and willing to do what they could for his support.

It was with the expectation of labor under circumstances of difficulty and discouragement

that I came here, and I endeavored to prepare my mind in the outset to meet them, and, if such might be the will of God, to overcome them by patient and persevering effort.

From this view of the religious condition of things at the time of my coming we will pass to consider the leading objects of my ministry.

The principal ends I have kept in view have been the moral and religious reformation and improvement of the people, to promote intelligence and virtue, morality and piety, the exercise of Christian charity among those of different sects, and of peace and good-will in the neighborhood and family relations of life. While sincerely believing that our own religious views are best suited to produce the most exalted perfection of character, I think I can say with truth that I have never sought to abridge in the slightest degree the freedom and usefulness of those who have entertained different opinions, but on the contrary have as far as possible endeavored to co-operate with them in every good work, and have wished them success in the way of well-doing.

It has not been the great object of my efforts to multiply conversions to a sect, but rather to

enlighten the understandings, and purify and expand and elevate the affections of my people, and to form their characters after the teaching and example of Christ. I have endeavored to keep in view the purpose of the gospel expressed by the apostle, when he says in reference to Jesus, "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Perfection of character according to the standard of the sermon on the mount, and of the example and life of Christ, is the end and aim which every man should propose to himself, and for the promotion of which among his people every minister of Christ should devote his chief energy and effort, because to make men righteous is a more glorious and blessed work than the upbuilding of a sect or the attainment of any object of earthly ambition. Such have been my views and aims in my work. My chief regret in the retrospect of the past is that they have not been more single and distinct and more faithfully and earnestly pursued.

From this brief and general statement of the leading objects of my ministry, we will pass to

consider, the methods by which I have sought, and *we* have labored together, for the attainment of these ends. After having preached here six or eight months, I felt the necessity of uniting all who were friendly to the objects we had in view in a religious society. To accomplish this, it was necessary to have a broad basis of union. A declaration of principles common to all Christians — such as belief in the fatherly character of God, and in the divine mission of Christ, and in the sacred Scriptures as a rule of life, and containing a statement of the object of association to be the promotion of “practical godliness in the world, and aiding each other in moral and religious improvement” — was drawn up, and about twenty signatures obtained. This was the first movement toward the organization of our society.

On the 29th of May, 1842, we observed, for the first time in Geneva, the ordinance of baptism and the Supper, and on the 25th of June the organization of the “First Christian Congregation of Geneva” was completed. In this organization we endeavored to suit our methods to our aims. Seeking to promote righteousness

rather than the interests of party or sect, and by making our basis broad enough for all Christians, we hoped to enlist the sympathies and secure the co-operation of all friends of Christianity.

Soon after the organization of the society, we began to feel the need of a more commodious place for public worship. The old court-house, where we held our meetings in summer, was unfurnished with a stove and so was uncomfortable for winter. We sometimes met in the basement of what is now the American House, and sometimes in a building on the east side of the river, which had been used as an establishment for rectifying whiskey. Sometimes we were nearly frozen during the services, and at others nearly blinded and suffocated with smoke. We at length made known our condition and wants, by correspondence and through the "Christian Register," to our friends in New England, and received from the Unitarian society in Roxbury eight hundred dollars, to aid us in building the church in which we now worship, and one hundred and fifteen dollars to go toward the support of the minister while the society was engaged in building the house. The possession of this house has aided

us in our work in many ways. It has removed the discouraging impression that our efforts were soon to prove a failure. It has not only met our own want of a commodious place of worship, but has given us an opportunity to afford some accommodation to our Methodist brethren previous to the erection of their house, and also to give to our Presbyterian friends a place for gathering and organizing the society. Having this house, we have been enabled to show by our acts the sincerity of our professions of good-will toward all who are endeavoring to promote the moral and religious improvement and welfare of the community.

Our Sunday-school has from the first been one of the principal methods employed for accomplishing the objects we have in view. We have sought to make it a school for instruction in Christian knowledge and virtue, and not a nursery of sectarian prejudice and exclusiveness.

Teachers and scholars from all denominations have been welcomed with a like cordiality to cooperation in the work of instruction, and to enjoyment of the privileges of the school. By this method we have sought to promote the prin-

ciples of an enlarged Christian charity, in the rising generation, and to cultivate respectful and friendly feelings among those educated in different forms of faith.

In my preaching I have endeavored to unite instruction with exhortation and to present the claims both of morality and piety. I have given expository lectures on various parts of the sacred Scriptures. I have given series of discourses on doctrinal subjects, and have frequently presented the claims upon our attention of the leading reforms of the day,—Freedom, Peace, and Temperance. I find on looking over my discourses that I have preached often upon the goodness of God, his presence and providence as motives to piety, and that I have dwelt much upon the character and work of Christ. My preaching has not been entirely without system, but it has been a good deal varied by circumstances, and dependent for its character upon what seemed at the time to be most needed.

Among our best methods I must notice the social conversation meetings for the study of the Scriptures. I was conscious of receiving more benefit from these meetings while they were

held than from almost anything else in which we have engaged. It gave me a knowledge of the wants of my people, and a feeling of interest in them, and of confidence in their sympathy, and of faith in the earnestness of their good purposes, which I had not before felt, and I cannot refrain from expressing a hope that we may be able to have something of the kind again. I should perhaps also mention the ladies' sewing-circle among the methods employed for promoting the objects of our society. Their meetings have not only been occasions for the culture of the social affections, but have furnished the means to adorn and to enlighten this outer sanctuary of our devotions. From time to time, we have met at the table of Christian communion to commemorate Christ's dying love, and strengthen the ties of holy sympathy and affection by which we are made one body, and connected with the one Head of the Church on earth and in heaven. In the use of these various methods for the accomplishment of the objects of our existence as a society, we may not at all times have been as single-hearted and earnest and faithful as we ought to have been, but I trust that our efforts

have not altogether failed of bringing the blessings of Christianity to our own hearts and to the community in which we live. From this view of our methods let us pass to consider (fourthly) the results.

From the nature of the leading objects we have had in view, and of the methods we have employed, much of the results are of a kind which lie beyond the sphere of human observation.

Denominational statistics are easily made out ; but the statistics of thought and affection, of spiritual growth and improvement, of the moral and religious progress of a community, are not so easily obtained. The visible results of a work which has to do mainly with things invisible may be apparently small, and yet the real influence and ultimate effects may be of great importance.

If we look at the moral and religious condition of this community as it was ten years ago, and compare it with the present, we shall discover a marked change for the better. Idleness, intemperance, and other forms of immorality and irreligion can, by comparison, hardly be said to exist among us. Instead of the sectarian strife which

in many communities is disturbing the peace of society, we are dwelling together in peace and good-will, our denominational relations causing no more contention than the circumstance that we have each our own family and home.

Methodists, Presbyterians, and Unitarians not only join hands for the promotion of temperance and other reforms, but labor together in the Sabbath-school, meet together for worship, and sit together about the table of our common Lord.

We may not claim the honor of having done all this work of reform and improvement; but we may justly claim to have done a share of it. Our efforts have contributed to the general result. We may not have accomplished as much in some directions as we hoped to do; we may not have done as well in anything as we wish and desire, or as well as we ought to have done; but still we have, through the blessing of God, accomplished something for which we should be grateful to him, and something which should encourage us to persevere with increased confidence and zeal in the way of well-doing.

We have in our immediate vicinity overcome, in a great degree, the prejudice which did at first

exist, and which, at a little distance from and around us, still exists against our faith. We have thus prepared the way for doing more good, for extending the knowledge of the truth and the spirit of charity more widely around us. As we each look within, and look back upon the ten years of life that have passed since we first sustained the relation of pastor and people, we doubtless feel in some degree conscious of coming short of a life in perfect accordance with our faith and purpose. But to me, and I hope to you, the relation has been pleasant and profitable. We may not have derived all the benefit from the relation which we might have done, but I trust it has been mutually a blessing, for the continuance of which, through some trials and difficulties and discouragements, we may justly be grateful to God.

Commencing my ministry here with little preparation, and no experience, and with no elder brethren of the profession near with whom to counsel, and partaking of the imperfections common to humanity, I now look back upon many mistakes and errors, imperfections and faults, for which I have needed the forbearance

and forgiveness of my people. That you have not failed to exercise such forbearance and kindness is cause of gratitude and affection.

He to whom much has been forgiven may very properly love much. Other ties bind us strongly together.

At the marriage altar we have sought the blessing of God upon the holiest and strongest affections of earth. We have knelt together in the house of mourning, to offer the prayer of submission and faith, and seek comfort and support from the Father of spirits. In connection with this subject, our thoughts turn naturally to one whose name stands first on the list of members of our society, — a man upon whose wisdom and integrity, upon whose deep interest in everything pertaining to the moral welfare of society, we all felt the strongest reliance; the man to whom we looked for sympathy, and went for counsel, and on whom we leaned for support, was taken away. In the experience of such a loss, we have a mutual feeling of bereavement and sympathy in sorrow, which is a strong bond of attachment to each other.

We have for these ten years been together in

joy and sorrow. We have encountered difficulty and borne trial and discouragement. The result is that we know each other better and love each other more than it would be possible for us to know and love strangers. Should God, in his mercy, permit us to continue our relation and labors for ten years more, we may hope, from the experience of the past, and the advantages we have gained, to do more and better than we have heretofore done.

Circumstances may occur which will make it expedient and necessary for us voluntarily to dissolve the connection we have held, but such a separation would be the severing of many strong and holy ties. God willing, I would prefer to do my work of life where I have begun. I am sorry not to have done more and better in the commencement; but with regard to past errors and deficiencies, we may as well follow the example of the great apostle in "forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth towards those which are before."

The day is hastening when we must each give account of our stewardship before God. For the use of all his gifts, for the improvement of all

our privileges and opportunities of growth in virtue and of doing good, we must give account.

May we find mercy with him for our past deficiencies, and in our future life be found faithful in that day.

VIII.

TRANSPLANTED AND WHAT THEN.

THERE was at once a new interest and genuine sorrow in the church at Geneva when Mr. Conant resigned his charge and prepared to leave them. The old deep human ties that hold their own, often, thank God, against the most dreadful strain of political difference, began to be felt everywhere. The strong, sweet words that had drawn these friends to him, who still could not be reconciled to his position on the most momentous question of the age, began to tell, and the holy, earnest life he had led among them for sixteen years had brought an influence of its own that could not be shred away even by the mighty sword that had come through Christ to divide them.

And so I am prepared to believe that in the "resolutions," which were of course got out as such things always are, — though there be noth-

ing at the heart of them but the ashes of a dead fire, — were in this case the heart-felt expression of a pure regard and prayer, as they proceed to tell how, during sixteen years, their minister has endeared himself to their hearts as a faithful preacher and kind friend, and at his departure retains their confidence, respect, and affection; how the great resources of his mind and manly independence and energy of character have done much to advance the whole interest of the community, and so, wherever he may go, they will send their best wishes after him, and will keep in their hearts the recollection of his faithfulness, goodness, kindness to the poor, and noble social qualities. All this they say while oppressed with sadness at their separation, yet glad also that, as this must be, he is to enter a wider field of usefulness, and commend him to the Christian sympathy of his new charge. For the rest I must drop the veil.

The Pattons and other fast friends of that fine grain, — friends who had never wavered or altered, but had clung to their minister through all, as is the fashion of those that are nurtured at the West Church in Boston, from the old

days of Dr. Mayhew to these new days of Dr. Bartol,— what they felt and said and did that was tender and true and generous can only be written in that other book which is the Book of Life.

So, on Sunday the 12th July, 1857, Mr. Conant, going to Rockford, preached there his first sermon as pastor of the church to a congregation of about seventy.

And the prospects of the society opened well ; in possession of a beautiful place for worship, with members in the church not to be surpassed by any within the knowledge of the writer, in any church, and with a strong desire to go onward and do good, the people received their new minister with the warmest welcome. Very soon eleven new members were added to the church ; on the first Sunday in April, 1858, twenty more ; on the 30th of May, ten more. There was a constant ripple of revival in the best and most living interests of the congregation. Things were got into good order, a Sunday-school society formed to take care of the Sunday-school, and other societies as they were needed to oversee other interests, and everything was bright with promise. And in these days he is to be traced to Chicago,

busy in the ordination of George Noyes as pastor over the church there, to Cincinnati, where the Western Conference was held in 1858, notable to the writer of this chapter, if to nobody else, as the time when Dr. Furness, of Philadelphia, who had made him out and said kind and encouraging things to him, invited him also to preach in his pulpit while he himself should go to the conference. After a time, also, Mr. Conant went to Geneva to preach on an exchange with Mr. Woodward, their minister; found that the disaffection that had been felt by a few toward him was wholly gone, and he was received with the most perfect cordiality and affection by everybody.

But the tree was too old to transplant. It began to be felt, after perhaps two years, that there was dearth and drought in the movement, that things were not prosperous. "It is rather a cold, dull time," he says, sadly, "and I feel at times greatly depressed, almost discouraged. I seem to accomplish nothing, and feel sometimes that I am not fit for a minister; and if I could do it with a clear conscience, I would gladly return to the plough. I know I ought to brace up like

a man ; but I do get soul heavy sometimes, and feel like saying Die.”

The truth was that he was hurt by the change from the old field to the new more than he could imagine. It was impossible that a nature so deep-rooted, and with so many delicate and tender rootlets netting his whole life to Geneva should not be damaged fearfully by being torn out after so long a time, and put down where everything has to grow afresh as it can. Perhaps he ought never to have left. Who shall say that, except they can know what had come of his staying? Only this we can say, if we will watch the lessons of the ministry as they are open to us everywhere, — that as a rule the worst mistake a minister can make is to leave the parish in which he has been long at work and through which he has established himself as a living power, and go to a new place. Generally an able minister, if he be in middle life, is only able through the accumulation of what is best of his life and power in those that have got the grace and glory of his youth. Put him then, where everything is strange, and according to the very excellence and nobility of his nature may

be his failure to connect. Widows and widowers do not often even pretend to be to each other, if they marry, what the husband and wife are who, as youth and maiden, fell in love, and have grown more loving in all the succeeding years. There are notable exceptions, but that is the rule; but the good men and women at Rockford were true to their minister. Men like Melancthon Starr and Roger Fowler and E. H. Griggs spared nothing of their means and labor to push the ark onward. And there was cheerfulness and a quick life in it. I went there in those days for the first time, and can remember how well pleased I was with the expressions of esteem I heard on all sides for Mr. Conant. I have felt that the following might go in and help make up the tale of the kindly Rockford life.

A PLEASANT INCIDENT.

To the Editor of the Christian Inquirer:

I want to tell you of a very pleasant interlude to the war fever, which occurred at Rockford, on the 13th of May, in the evening. Rockford is a place of exceeding beauty, from its situation on

the Rock River, its position as the centre of a rich farming country, and at this time because it is buried in blossom. How old a place it is, no one can tell. There are mounds on the banks of the river which seem to have been the first rude ideas of the pyramids, and out of which you can dig pottery and other relics, together with the bones of those for whose sake they were buried, and the monuments were painfully raised over them. I suppose the owners of these bones must have been of the first families in Rockford, and notable enough in their day; but that day was so long since, that even their ghosts seem to have died. (Did you ever think of the fact that ghosts do die, after a time?) How completely these old kings have abdicated was illustrated to me, while talking with a gentleman of the town about those things, when he said to his wife, —

“ My dear, where’s that skull I dug out of the mound ? ”

“ Oh ! ” said the lady, laughing, “ some one let it fall, and it crumbled all away ; so I swept it out of doors.”

And that was the last on earth of the "stoic of the woods, — the man without a tear."

Rockford is of interest to us, also, in the fact that there is in it an earnest band of liberal Christians. They have a good church, built of a fine yellow limestone; a good society, though not very large; and a good pastor, Rev. A. H. Conant. Brother Conant is a wine that needs no bush to the readers of the "Inquirer," East or West; but I must tell you what I saw in the parsonage on that Monday evening. The parson looks about thirty-four years of age; his good wife, thirty, or, by'r lady, thirty-one. They were possessed, somehow, with the idea that they had been married twenty-five years; and as there were two handsome young gentlemen and a lady, who claimed to be their children, but seemed to be their brothers and sister, the parish had to give in, and believe that they must be a great deal older than they seemed, and give them a silver wedding. Of course, there was a silver shower, and Mistress Conant's two or three troubles took the form of casters. The friends came together, and a very pleasant company they were. Collyer, from Chicago, extemporized a service, the

children standing with the parents. He said that this happy meeting was well fitted to bear out a deep conviction of his life, — that all true loves and matches and marriages were the result of divine inspiration and appointment ; such matches *were* made in heaven ; that it was a double blessing for a minister to have a good wife, because he was so often called to unite others, and if his own marriage were unhappy, it would be an ever-fresh misery to feel that he might be helping to fasten others to misery, but an ever-fresh joy when his own life was a joy ; that before the time of their golden wedding should come, both these dear friends might have gone over the golden river ; but there came a double blessing even in that, — they would leave good children to take their place, and be reunited in the holier love, where man and wife are as the angels of God. So, with a simple prayer, in which all joined, the wedding came to an end ; then congratulations, cake, and wine, music, singing, a little dancing, and we parted, all asking that these dear friends and devoted servants of the Master, who have been faithful as pastor and pastor's wife for twenty years to liberal Chris-

tianity in the West, might still, for a long life to come, be spared for the work, and abound more and more in all wisdom and goodness as they have abounded.

It was not long after this that a cannon-shot struck the ark of the covenant at Fort Sumter, and brought the West to her feet in a mighty passion of indignation and tears. Then the hymns given out to be sung were "When Israel of the Lord beloved" and "My country, 'tis of thee;" and the text for the sermon was "Jesus said but now he that has no sword let him sell his garment and buy one." And the anthem was, "The star-spangled banner," and the altar cloth was the flag that the rebel was determined to destroy, and the true man determined to defend. The appeal was to the Lord of Hosts. The end had come, and the beginning, and there in a day, through the darkness and fire, God opened a way by which his faithful servant should do the crowning work of his life, and enter into his eternal joy.

IX.

FROM ROCKFORD TO HIS REST.

EARLY in July, 1861, Mr. Conant, having resigned his charge in Rockford, came to Chicago, proposing to go out as chaplain, if he could find a chaplaincy, and anxious, if possible, to get that of the 19th Illinois regiment under the command of Colonel Turchin, because he thought it would give him plenty to do and the officers were men he would prefer to serve with. I remember going with him to see Mr. Augustus Burley, of our city, his old and fast friend, whose children had boarded at the little Geneva parsonage, and whose services to our city and country in the war were singularly noble and unselfish. Mr. Burley gladly exerted himself to get Mr. Conant the post he wanted, and the matter was so far arranged that, on the 22d of that month, he writes to his father, "I expect to start this afternoon to join the 19th Illinois, now in Missouri, with a

strong hope of obtaining the chaplaincy of that regiment. Letters recommending me for the post have been sent forward to the colonel and other officers, and now I have concluded to go myself and attend to the matter in person."

The application was successful. On the 2d of August he writes to his wife from the steamboat "Empress," off Cape Girardeau, how he is rejoicing in the thought that, with a thousand young men for his parish and congregation he may be able to do quite as much for the moral and spiritual elevation of man as he had done at Rockford. "If it is best," he continues, "that I should live and work in this way *for a few years* until the war is over, I shall feel secure in the divine protection; but if it is the will of God that I should finish my course in the cause of freedom and humanity, I hope, dear wife, you will accept that termination to my life as the best, trusting in the wisdom and love of our Father."

So the good man came in this spirit to the last work he was to do this side heaven, as cheerful, hearty, and hopeful, as he was when he had written what bright days they were twenty-five

years before at his wedding. "I am well," he says, "as ever I was, sleep soundly on the soft side of a plank, and ready for whatever may come."

It would be a shame now, I think, to write any words that should take the place of Mr. Conant's own. I propose, therefore, through the rest of this chapter, to print such parts of his letters as will tell this story as it came out of the head and heart of the good man day by day, omitting nothing, I believe, of an important or curious interest, while omitting much relating to private and tender domestic concerns, only meant for the most loving eyes, to him, on the planet.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF 1861.

(To his Wife.)

FIRST SERMON IN CAMP.

Aug. 4th. I have just been preaching to the soldiers from the top of a large sycamore log. The regiment were not all together, and I only gave them a short discourse on the duty of manly endurance and mutual kindness. I doubt whether I ever spoke fifteen minutes with better moral effect in my life.

Aug. 11. Preached to the officers and soldiers assembled from the text "Thy kingdom come," endeavoring to show that the war in which we are engaged is a practical utterance of this prayer, and ought to be carried on by us in a *worthy* and *manly way*.

(*To his Wife.*)

DISPOSITION TO MAKE THE BEST OF HIS CIRCUMSTANCES.

Aug. 20. To-day I obtained a candle box of the commissary, and with a hatchet and my pocket-knife have made of it a writing-desk, and I also obtained of the sappers and miners a board, some nails, and the use of a saw and plane, and made a bench to sit upon. Now I am sitting before the door of my tent with my new desk on one end of the bench, almost as well fixed as I should be in my study chair.

The few ladies — officers' wives in camp — are worth more than a file of soldiers in keeping order. I wish we could have twice as many; but it is no place for a woman of delicate nerves. The most shocking sights, sounds, and odors of all sorts are of perpetual occurrence, yet a strong-minded

and pure-hearted woman may pass through it all unharmed. Mrs. Turchin blooms like a fair flower in it. She reminds me very much of Lucy Stone Blackwell. With all the refinement of a lady, she has the energy and self-reliance of a man; she feels able to take charge of herself, carries a nice little revolver and dagger in her belt, and has a dignity of manner and bearing that secures respect from the roughest soldier.

Sept. 25. I feel that God's great providence is over all, and nothing will happen to me, or to others, contrary to his will, or which, on the whole, is not for the best. I have no desire to be a victim of this unholy rebellion, but if I should be taken prisoner, or lose my life, I hope that not only I shall meet whatever comes manfully, but that all my friends will bear it with a courage and patience worthy the cause. I have felt greatly mortified and vexed at President Lincoln's interference with General Fremont's noble action,—so much so that I have almost regretted having joined the army. It seems to me it will strengthen and encourage the rebels and protract the war, and that the North if a different policy is not adopted, will be thoroughly

whipped, and I am not sure but it is the best thing that can happen, as a means of making us willing to do justice, and make an end of slavery, the cause of all our troubles.

PROTEST AGAINST TEMPORIZING WITH REBELLION.

Sept. 26. If the rebels should suffer a thorough defeat in the vicinity of Washington, it would probably hasten their expulsion from Kentucky and Missouri; or if the government should send a naval force south, acting aggressively instead of defensively, we may expect a retreat of the traitors from this neighborhood (Lebanon Junction, Kentucky). But the miserable temporizing of the government in relation to slavery, and apparent fear of offending slaveholders, and the manœuvring to keep clear of interference with the infernal institution which is at the bottom of all the treason, so encourages the rebels, that it would be no matter of surprise if they should defeat us half a dozen times, and until we are ready and willing to carry on the war in earnest, and strike at the heart of their treason. I hope and pray that a higher and more earnest and righteous purpose may

inspire the hearts of our people, that we may redeem our country from ruin, and make our government the support of freedom and justice it was designed to be by its founders, and that kingdom of heaven for which humanity waits with longing hope and devout aspiration.

Sunday Evening, Sept. 28. You know, dearest, how down-spirited I have usually been after my day's work on Sunday. I have been thinking over my experiences this evening, and, strange to say, for the result of a Sunday evening meditation, I have come to a cheerful conclusion. I do not think, on the whole, that I am much, if any, more discontented here in the army than I sometimes felt in Geneva or in Rockford. Men did not do as I wanted to have them there, and it is the same here; I had times of feeling that I was laboring in vain, and I have such times here. But really I am perhaps doing as much good as ever I did, or as ever I shall do, and gratitude for my opportunities and means of usefulness is quite as befitting as grumbling and discontent with my condition and work. I think on the whole, that I have done a fair day's work, and that I may hope for God's blessing on his

word of truth. The men seemed (when I preached to-day) attentive, interested, and grateful. I hope the seed sown will take root and bear good fruit. I should be glad to be with you, but as it does not seem the way and will of Divine Providence, I will try to be contented and happy where I am. It used to trouble me that my salary and support seemed a burden to my people, but this trouble while I am here is at an end. My pay comes without grudging and without stint; it is a little delayed sometimes, but there is no fear of failure in the end. I have rest from hard study, and from the task of writing a weekly sermon whether inspired or not inspired with a word of truth from God, for humanity. The *rest* is, in fact, in excess, and I would like a little communion with my library; but I have rocks and trees and clouds and living men to read, and can get from them precious lessons, if I am an attentive student. It does seem as though with all these things, and good health and good rations, a man ought to be happy, and might enjoy himself, if he had a mind to. I suspect having a mind to is the chief thing in the business. I mean to try to have a mind to and to

have a heart to enjoy the good gifts of the bountiful Provider for human want and welfare. Then, more than all these, I have loved and loving ones at home, who, I hope, are bravely doing their duty in this hour of trial and peril to our nation. I can talk with honest pride of my sons in the army of freedom, and of my heroic wife and daughter and mother at home, taking care of themselves and of the little one who bears an honored name. Ah! in having such home treasures I am rich, and may well rejoice. It will not seem long after it is past, this time of separation, though counting the days as they pass one by one, with no tidings from home for weeks, it does seem rather long and wearisome and lonely; but we will hope that the future has ample amends in store for us.

Elizabethtown, Ky., Oct. 28th, 1861. We have had in camp a Methodist or Baptist exhorter by the name of Moody, sent out by the Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago, who held evening prayer-meetings in camp several evenings of last week. He was exceed-


ingly active and earnest in his efforts to get up a revival, and evidently displeased with me for not indorsing his proceedings and aiding his enterprise. I told some of his friends that it was much like what it would be for a pedler of patent pills to come to camp and propose to look after the health of the regiment, — to cure all distempers with his pills, and all flesh wounds and broken bones with Perry Davis' Pain Killer, telling the soldiers that the treatment they were receiving was unsafe, and expecting the regimental physician and surgeon to indorse him and aid his efforts. At his first introduction to me, he did not hesitate to intimate that what I was doing was of no account, and one of the most evident results of his efforts with those in sympathy with him was to produce in them the same impression, and lead them to utter it and to seek to give it currency. One of his zealous converts had the politeness to tell me if I had gone to work as Moody did, half the regiment might have been converted before this. Last evening one of them went to the colonel with a complaint of my inefficiency; but the colonel told him all the regiment were not Methodists, and they

could hardly expect a chaplain for every sect, or one that would be equally pleasing to all. Very little satisfaction will they be likely to get for their complaints from him.

(*To his Wife.*)

AN INDOOR VIEW OF HIS MILITARY LIFE.

Elizabethtown Ky., Nov. 2d. I suppose you think of us in the cold November rain, camped in a tent, as in a very miserable condition. Let me describe some of our inconveniences and sufferings, that you may know just how to pity us. Day before yesterday we made rather a blazing fire in our tent, and our barrel-built chimney outside took fire, and blazed away finely for a few minutes; but the water-pail afforded a sufficient fountain and the dipper an adequate engine for extinguishing the flames, and to prevent a general conflagration from a similar accident in the future, we constructed a chimney yesterday morning of turf, and surmounted that with the barrels, obtaining in this way both safety from fire, and a good draught. In the afternoon we went to the tin shop in town, and got a piece of sheet-iron about a yard square, and had a hole

cut in the middle of it, over which we can put a kettle or frying-pan for cooking, and a small hole in each of the four corners through which to drive pins to fasten it in place, looking about so fashion, . This we placed over the trench leading into our chimney, and behold we have a cook-stove. Fireplaces in tents we now regard as quite out of fashion ; nothing but a *stove* is in any degree decent or tolerable. Before we got it quite done, it began to rain, but we had a good pile of wood in our tent, and as we sat over our stove dry and warm, while the storm raged without, you can perhaps picture in imagination “*our sufferings.*” When supper-time came, we stirred up some Indian meal with an egg and due proportions of soda, tartaric acid, sugar, salt, and water, and putting our little bake kettle upon the stove, we put in it a large basin containing the prepared materials, and covered the top with coals, and in a few minutes after, as we lifted the cover and looked in, behold a johnny-cake light as a sponge, and done to perfection. We had syrup made from melted sugar and fresh butter, and a good cup of black tea, and thus wretchedly provided, and with a keen

appetite, you can imagine how we did suffer. Then, as to lodgings, we levelled the pile of straw under the blanket, and placing our well-filled straw tick upon it, with our feet toward the stove, and a load of blankets and overcoat and outside of all an india-rubber.

After our usual evening worship, we crawled into as warm and soft a bed as if at home, and heard the storm roaring without and the rain driving against our tent, while all was dry and comfortable within. Imagine the horrors of such a night. I have not asked Henry how his mind was affected by it, but for myself, I awoke with a recollection that dreams of my boyhood, full of beauty and joy, played with my intellect, blending things of thirty or forty years ago with things of my Rockford home, in weird fancies and droll but happy confusion. Ah! dearest, and all my family and friends, do think of us every night with a becoming commiseration of our condition and pity for our privations. But all joking as regards ourselves aside, it was a hard night for the common soldier, especially for such as had to stand on guard exposed to the pelting storm; it was hard for many who have

insufficient clothing and blankets, and no fire in their tents; there was doubtless a great deal of real suffering in our camp and other camps in the vicinity. It is no wonder that men under such circumstances should commit such depredations as burning fence-rails to keep warm, and even steal from stables the unthreshed bundles to put in their tents to sleep on.

(To his Wife.)

Camp Lincoln, Elizabethtown, Ky., Nov. 16.

I have not had as good attendance on my preaching, since the visit of Mr. Moody, of the Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago, as before, and there has been a good deal of fault-finding because I do not visit more, preach and pray more, and so forth. Whether it is in any degree due to the sayings of Mr. Moody, I cannot of course say certainly, but it looks like it. I have been told that it was probably his intention to get me turned out of the chaplaincy, and get himself, or some other orthodox man in my place. He went to General Sherman at Louisville, and entered a formal written complaint against the regiment, as being in such a

demoralized condition as to demand immediate attention. But after reading it, the adjutant, as I was informed, threw it in the fire as unworthy of notice. The officers of our regiment, when they heard of his complaint at Louisville, were, in general, exceedingly indignant, and I have heard that he narrowly escaped a whipping from one of them who since met him in the streets in Chicago. I am very glad no violence was done to him.

(To his Daughter.)

PLAIN PREACHING.

Camp Lincoln, Elizabethtown, Ky., Nov. 18.
I obtained yesterday the use of the Baptist meeting-house in Elizabethtown in the afternoon for our regiment to meet in, and had a good many citizens besides. It happened that I had a sermon on the war, in which I expressed my views pretty freely on the way it had been, and the way it ought to be, conducted, particularly on the confiscation of the slave property of rebels and the emancipation in the rebellious States. It happened, also, that most of my audience, except our regiment, were slave-holders, and probably a

majority were in sympathy with secession. For once in their lives, they had an opportunity to hear a little plain preaching on the subject of slavery, and I had an opportunity to preach without hindrance, or fear of molestation, to slaveholders in a slave State. The good deacon of the church and his wife, who are slaveholders, but Unionists, were evidently sore alarmed, and a good deal troubled about the effect of the sermon on their secession neighbors, but I hope a little wholesome truth will do them no lasting injury.

(To his Wife.)

A PIOUS HOPE.

Camp Lincoln, Elizabethtown Nov. 26. I had a very pious letter of exhortation from some orthodox sister in Christ in Chicago a few days ago, who seemed very anxious that I should do my duty, and I have since had a letter from an agent of the Presbyterian Publication Society of Philadelphia, offering to send me tracts for circulation. I wrote to the agent that he might send on his tracts by mail, and I would circulate them. As to the sister in Christ, as she only signed her

initials, I did not take the trouble to reply to her. I hope in the Lord's good time he will take her to glory. I am sure I should much prefer that all *such sisters* should go to glory than come into camp. I hardly know which is most annoying, orthodox bigotry and cant, or infidel blasphemy and cursing. Both are bad enough. The hope of doing some good still keeps me in heart.

(*To his Father.*)

UNLIMITED CONFIDENCE IN GOD RULING OVER ALL
MEN AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

Camp Lincoln, Elizabethtown, Ky., Nov. 29.
You can hardly feel more impatient at the slow movement in our military departments than do most of our men in camp. I share, to some extent, the general impatience to have something done, particularly in the South, during cool weather, the only time when we can do anything there. But I feel more confidence in the wisdom of those at the head of affairs than I do in my own, and try to be satisfied with the faithful performance of my own humble trust, finding more call for wisdom and virtue

herein than I can respond to satisfactorily. It is my chief satisfaction to believe that superhuman wisdom is directing the destinies of our nation, and to hope the issue will be Emancipation, and the full realization of Liberty and Justice to all within our national domain. I long to see this kingdom of God come in six months. But if Providence sees fit to employ three or more years in so great a work, I hope I shall have patience and rejoice in every step of the grand advance of the incoming age of glory and blessedness.

I feel greatly cheered at the indications of a growing disposition on the part of the Government to accept the help of all loyal men without regard to color or condition, and trust that when justice is done to oppressed humanity, we may begin to lift up our heads and hands, rejoicing that the time of our redemption draweth nigh. Whatever misfortunes may be necessary to teach us this lesson of Justice, whatever delay may be necessary to impress it thoroughly, may well be cheerfully and patiently endured. Things which seem to us disastrous so often turn out to be the

best that could have been done, that we may well wait on the Lord and hope in his salvation.

(*To his Wife.*)

STRAW.

Camp Nevin, Nolin Creek, Ky., Dec., 1861.

Yesterday was a very warm, summer-like day, and I preached to the soldiers in the open air before the colonel's tent. I learned the night before that many of the soldiers had no straw in their tents to sleep on, and were uncomfortable for want of it; and so I preached from Exodus 5:16. "There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick; and behold, thy servants are beaten, but the fault is in thine own people."

Without straw for his tent, I said, it was very hard for a man, however well disposed, to be a good soldier. Sleeping on the bare ground produced colds, indigestion, consumption, and rheumatism; and with any of these complaints upon him, it was impossible for a man to be a good soldier. Then, again, it had a moral significance and influence. A man full of discomfort is likely, also, to be full of ill-humor and to say and do

bad things. Hence the duty of the officers to do all in their power for the comfort and welfare of the men, and especially to set before them an example of good morals. Hence the duty of the men, also, to take care of themselves. If some of you would save the money you spend for whiskey, buy a tick and fill it with straw, and if they did not give you straw, like the Israelites, gather stubble, or corn-husks, or even leaves, you would find it much easier to be manly, moral, and noble men.

If a man will not try to take care of himself, all the officers can do will not avail to make him comfortable. Have a practical faith, fellow-soldiers, in the gospel of straw for your tents, — in the gospel of a good bed and good food, and it will help you to exercise faith in every other good thing in human goodness and divine goodness, and the good and glorious hopes of immortality. The gospel of God's grace to the body precedes and prepares the way for the gospel of his grace to the soul. In immediate attention to material welfare lay the foundation for moral and spiritual and eternal well-being.

(To his Wife.)

Dec. 26. You would be amused to see the contrivances of the soldiers for guarding against the cold and storm. I found a Rocky Mountain trapper in Company K this forenoon, who had dug a hole six feet square, and five feet deep, covered it all over with earth; then in one side at the bottom dug into the clay a hole eighteen inches square, and a little distance from the side of his pit another hole to meet it from the top, so he had a fireplace and chimney; then his fire baked the clay, and he had a nice brick fireplace and chimney; and I see quite a number of others following the example. This with a tent over it makes a very nice hut.

(To his Wife.)

AN EXCHANGE WITH A BAPTIST BROTHER.

Camp Jefferson, Ky., Dec. 29. I went, by agreement, and exchanged with Brother Coffin, of the 10th Wisconsin. It has been as beautiful a day overhead as midsummer. I went on "Puss" [his pony] without my overcoat, and was warm enough for comfort, but the clay mud was nasty. I had opportunity to learn that our regiment was not peculiar in some of its disagreea-

ble habits ; worse cursing and swearing about being compelled to go to meeting than I overheard there I never overheard at home, or anywhere else. The opposite of blessing was heaped upon chaplains without stint, and hints were dropped by the officers of dull, insignificant preaching as being a nuisance, quite significant of sympathy with the dissatisfaction of the men. I was listened to with attention, and treated with distinguished consideration, invited to dinner by the lieutenant-colonel and major, — the colonel being called away, — feasted on Christmas turkey and chickens, and entertained with literary and moral discussions in a most charming way. It was very fine. “ Change of pastures makes fat calves,” “ new brooms sweep clean,” and so forth. Now, think I to myself, as I was riding home, I have no doubt that my good Brother Coffin, who appears to be held in so light esteem as a preacher at home has delighted my regiment with his discourse, and particularly those who think lightly of me. So, keeping my own secret about what I had heard, I made inquiry, and found it was as I had anticipated. He had given general satisfaction, and some of the sourest sectarian

grumblers were loud and eloquent in his praise. It was the first gospel sermon they had heard in six months. I have no doubt my regiment, with a few exceptions, would think and talk of him as his own does; and on the other hand, I should find those in his regiment equally dissatisfied as are men of like prejudices in my own. So let the grumblers make much of their discontent, while we both endeavor, with the ability God giveth, to do the best we can. I have no doubt that Brother Coffin is really a man of good abilities, deep earnestness, and great excellence of character; doing good to those who are in sufficient sympathy with him to receive good from him. On the whole, the exchange has been pleasant to me, and rather encouraging, and I rejoice in it, as an exhibition of a Christian spirit of liberality and charity in the army which is rare indeed in civil clerical life.

A chaplain can, in this respect, act more like a Christian gentleman than the pastor of an orthodox church. As chaplain, he has broad Christian ends to serve, and not the petty interests of a sect. But it is no place in the army for those

who depend for their enjoyment on "soft raiment" and social amenities and the sweet courtesies and charming graces of refined, cultivated Christian society. It is a John Baptist mission, to be fulfilled in a hair mantle and a leather girdle, and with an axe-man's blows at the root of prevalent evils.

I have been slowly learning the necessity of working without gloves, and to follow Paul's direction to Timothy, — "Those that sin openly rebuke before all, that others, also, may fear; and let no man despise thee," and that the example of Jesus in making and using a whip has a practical and important significance. There are money-changers, gamblers, rascals for whom a flogging is needful and useful, and he is no true disciple of Christ who will not on occasion administer something of the kind.

I imagine I see a humorous, roguish kind of a smile on your face as you read such sentences from me, and think of my anti-belligerent views a few years ago. But I can only say experience is a great teacher, and new circumstances give us new views, and a change of position some

times changes opinion and feeling in a way as surprising to ourselves as to others.

(To his Wife.)

Camp Jefferson, Bacon Creek, Ky., Jan. 1st, 1862. One of the pleasant recollections that came to me this morning was the circumstance that on the 1st of January, 1836, I wrote a letter from the Desplaine River, in Illinois, to Betsey M. Kelsey in Brandon, Vermont. God be thanked for the happiness of that day and year, and for all the joy of which it was the prelude. How much of domestic enjoyment has been my experience, and hope I may say yours, also, in these twenty-six years of life! The recollection is just occasion of gratitude and fit inspiration of a still purer and deeper love for each other; and yet our love has at no time seemed deficient in these qualities. God be thanked for the children he has given us, and for all their good qualities, their good behavior, their worth, and prospects of usefulness and happiness in life. Their worth and welfare is the multiplication of our enjoyments, and we have occasion of gratitude that they are doing so well.

(To his Father.)

Bowling Green, Ky., Feb. 25th, 1862. I feel sorry for your financial difficulties, but I hope you will give yourself as little trouble and anxiety about it as possible. "We brought nothing into this world," as Paul says, "and can carry nothing out;" and I presume that, notwithstanding all losses, you will have enough to carry you comfortably through; and if your means fail, mine may hold out, and will be cheerfully used for your comfort, should occasion demand. The war has produced general disturbance, but we may hope for prosperity with the return of peace. When I see what men have lost here by the robbery and burning of the rebel army, and by the destruction of timber fences, grain fields, etc., by both armies, I think our friends of the North have little reason to complain. Many Union men of this town have been burned out, and all they had destroyed in a few hours. All around the country has been stripped and devastated; and all that many of the people have to show for their horses, cattle, and crops is southern scrip and due-bills from quartermasters of the Confederate States, which

may be redeemed if the rebellion succeeds, — a poor show just at present.

(To his Daughter.)

Camp near Fayetteville, Tenn., March 6. This morning I sent in a match-box a prisoner captured at Athens, Ala., to Dr. Le Baron, of Geneva. It was a rebellious and bellicose beetle bug, about as large as a small mouse, with enormous mandibles. I informed the doctor where he was captured, and that I had kept him in close confinement for about ten days, and as he would not take the oath of allegiance to the United States, I sent him as a prisoner to him to be dealt with in a proper manner. This is the only prisoner I have sent home as yet from the war. The honey-bees, flies, and butterflies all hum and flutter in a loyal way, feeling no sympathy with rebellion, and the pe-wees, wrens, larks, and swallows sing in real Northern Union style. There are songsters of the grove, whose plumage and song are new to me, but there is evidently nothing treasonable and malicious about them, and no thought of murderous warfare is harbored in their breasts, unless, perhaps, the military necessity of foraging upon bugs

and worms, and mayhap, in an emergency, taking, without a "voucher," a few grains of wheat or oats from a ripening field. Soldiers who take chickens in a similar way ought not to complain of them, particularly as no "general orders" have been issued to them forbidding such things. Set a bowl of water in the sunshine and hold a piece of glass over it, and see the bright reflection dance about on the wall or overhead. Just so are the rippling waves of the river now making of the reflected sunlight dancing Jacks upon the shaded, overhanging wall of rock across the water from my tent. Cheer, cheer, cheer, cheer, sings a little bird in the great sassafras tree overhead. Whether he is cheering the sport of the wavelet or something else which excites his exultation, I am not able to declare. His comrades seem to understand him, and respond heartily with chirp and twitter, warble and song, whistle and bird-shout, and the crow, high overhead, caws his sympathy and approval.

(To his Wife.)

Camp Martin Van Buren, below Murfreesborough, Tenn., March 22. The negroes are

the truest friends we have, and take every safe opportunity to give us useful information; and it is abominable meanness, as well as stupid folly, that our officers will not generally avail themselves of the advantage of their friendly disposition, and accept the assistance they might render us in prosecuting the war. We deserve defeat and disgrace until we are willing to let the oppressed race co-operate with us against the rebels and oppressors who are not only warring against Republican Government, but against humanity. If the punishment could only fall on those who deserve it, I should say let it come, no matter how soon; but we are all bound up together, and must take our share of the weal or woe involved in the conduct of the war. My hope is that we shall grow wiser by experience and do better, and that the desire of the righteous shall be fulfilled, and the rod of the oppressor be broken, and the counsel of the wicked come to naught. Does not God rule on the earth?

(To his Daughter.)

Camp Van Buren, March 26. I should not object to a close of the war in four weeks, and

a return home from this camp; and I sometimes think it among the possibilities that we may do so. But there are indications of a long struggle. If our Government only had the courage and common sense to declare the slaves of traitors free, and take them into service as laborers, or enlist them as soldiers, it might make short work of pulling down the rebellion. But if the policy is pursued of preserving slavery and the Union too, we may look out for a long and hard struggle. Until we are ready to do justice, or something approaching towards it, to the colored race, we are not ready for a settlement of the strife, and the restoration of peace. — we are not ready for even a successful prosecution of the war. But it is little I can do to change the course of events. I think before the war is ended, however, we should be willing to take hold of it more in earnest, and let slavery go to destruction to save the nation.

(To his Wife.)

Camp Van Buren, March 31. Yesterday I preached from the text, "There is no power but of God, and if God be for us, who can be against us?" I had a brass drum for a desk, and a

rified brass cannon on either side for the walls of my pulpit. Not a large attendance, but I gave them a plain, earnest talk on the necessity of obedience to the laws of God in order to enlisting on our side the power of God, — of being for truth, justice, and humanity if we would have God for and with us. I also spoke of the failure of many of our military men to recognize the importance of moral and religious influences and moral force in the prosecution by citizen soldiery of a war for the moral welfare of our nation and of universal humanity. . . . I have not been more delighted with anything since the commencement of the war than with President Lincoln's special message recommending the passage of a resolution favorable to gradual emancipation in the border slave States. This looks, indeed, like the dawn of day, the breaking light of freedom, and a true and lasting peace. Just as fast and far as slavery is abolished, the victory is fully won, the cause of strife removed, and abiding peace obtained. But it must be done as the President is doing it, gradually and cautiously, as the people are ready and willing to co-operate with it. All the delay and suffering experienced

has been a necessary preparation for united and efficient action ; and we may yet need more of the same kind to bring us a nation fully up to the mark. But what is needful I feel sure will be, and God's glory will be revealed in the deliverance of the oppressed, and the thorough regeneration of our nation. The blood of our heroes, like the blood of Christ, will be our cleansing from the sin of pride, oppression, and cruelty, of which we have been so long guilty as a people. If we are indeed redeemed by the blood shed, the salvation will exceed the cost. The ultimate blessings secured will be more than worthy the sacrifices made. If I should happen to come home without a scratch or scar, I shall feel as though I had hardly earned a right to share the blessings obtained by the bloody sacrifices of others. But God knows I have not been without moral sufferings in the endeavor to do my duty, and these may be a substitute perhaps for physical ones.

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT.

CHAPLAIN'S QUARTERS, 19TH REG. ILL. VOLS.,
CAMP MARTIN VAN BUREN, March 31, 1862.

Report of the Moral and Religious Condition of the 19th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers, for the Quarter ending March 31st, 1862.

To MAJOR FREDERICK HARDING, Commanding:

In presenting the following report, the chaplain would remark that, while the moral and religious condition of the 19th Regiment affords some cheering confirmation of the substantial truth of the beautiful, inspiring, and poetic fancy that every human being has "an angel side," it also leaves little room for doubt that there is for a portion of humanity an opposite side, which can only be characterized as bestial and devilish. In regard to the low vices of profanity, drunkenness, and gambling, there is great need of reform and improvement, but very little hope of it until initiated and sustained by the officers of the regiment. All which is respectfully presented to serious consideration and earnest attention by A. H. Conant, chaplain of the 19th Reg. Ill. Vols.

(To his Sister.)

Shelbyville, Tenn., April 7th. I sympathize with your desire to have the war effect the re-

removal of its iniquitous cause, and have sometimes felt the apprehension that it would fail of it. But, on the whole, I am inclined to be hopeful. We of the North did not desire or design to have war, but it came in spite of us ; so we do not as a whole want to interfere with slavery in the prosecution and conclusion of it. But I feel confident we shall be compelled to do it, willingly or unwillingly. A higher power is at work, and for higher ends than govern our action. I was more excited and elated by the special message of President Lincoln on the subject of emancipation in the border States than I have been by any victory we have gained. I think it is the beginning of the end of slavery, and hope that, in the same wise and just spirit, the subject will be followed up until the glorious result is attained. I feel not only the physical, but the moral horrors of this war. But if through all this agony the nation is really regenerated, it will be as a drop in the bucket to the blessings secured. I feel shocked and disgusted at the depravity and corruption exhibited in camp. It seems such an outrage that so holy a cause as that in which we are engaged should be desecrated and compro-

mised by the vileness and iniquity of those who are sustaining it, that I am often sick and disheartened, and feel as though nothing but a severe flogging by our enemies, and a just retribution for our sins, can do us any real good. But for the sake of those who love righteousness and hate iniquity, and are striving with all their energy to do well, I hope and pray for the continued success of our armies, and the speedy end of the rebellion.

(*To his Son.*)

Decatur, Alabama, April 21. I was sorry to hear of the death of Colonel Ellis, at Pittsburg Landing. It is a sad experience for his wife and little family. How many brave men have fallen in this struggle for freedom and constitutional law against slavery and self-will! But we have reason to hope that by this shedding of blood our nation will obtain redemption from the sin and curse of slavery and lawlessness, and the reward be greater than the sacrifice. If it should be my fortune to fall a victim, I know you would all grieve over it; but I hope you would also rejoice that I laid the offering of my

life upon the altar of freedom and humanity, and fell for so good and noble a cause. Death must come to us all, and it may be esteemed fortunate if it come in such a way as greatly to promote the welfare of mankind. I hope to live and return to you to enjoy long the results of a successful war for the maintenance of our government, and the best ideas of which it is significant; but if I should not, I hope you will always esteem it an honor that, in God's providence, I had a place among the hosts of martyrs to freedom.

(*To his Wife.*)

Decatur, Alabama, April 22, 1862. It seems as though the chief hardship and suffering has not fallen to me in camp, but to you at home. While I have had little or no opportunity for the exercise of heroic virtues, you have had severe trials of courage, endurance, self-sacrifice, and won laurels quite as worthy of ambition as those of the brave defenders of freedom. It is not the place or circumstance that constitutes essential greatness, but the true, noble, brave spirit, which meets and masters all. So you have been exhibiting and acquiring heroism at home; while in

the camp and on the march, I have done little more than to look out for my own comfort and welfare.

(To his Sister.)

Camp Mitchell, Mt. Athens, Alabama, May 16th, 1862. I sympathize with your repugnance at the horrors of war, and feel, as worse than the mortal agonies and social bereavements, the demoralization of men in camp life. But I still hope that out of all these evils the great providence of God will bring forth greater good, and the agonies will be followed by the new bulk of our nation, the night of iniquity by the dawning of the day of freedom, and these conflicts with the powers of darkness be followed by the triumph of righteousness and the coming in power and glory of the kingdom of heaven. If the right prevails over the wrong, if the curse of slavery is removed, and we come forth from the war a redeemed people, all the sacrifice will be amply repaid. Hoping and trusting this will be the ultimate result, I endeavor to endure patiently and wait cheerfully, and do the little I can do, and leave the rest to Him who cares for us all.

(To his Wife.)

There are as vile beasts in human shape in camp as are permitted to pollute the earth with their presence. It is a place of abominations. But there is one comfort, a man need not make himself mean in the midst of meanness. The soul can create for itself a heaven in the midst of hell, and make all abominable things add to the depth of its purity and strength of its integrity through the sentiment of disgust and horror and detestation excited against them. I do not think I ever could have felt such abhorrence and hatred of certain forms of vice, if I had not seen their hideousness in camp, as my recent experiences awakened. So this purgatory may be of service to me after all, I believe; indeed, it will be my own great folly and fault if I am not only a wiser but a better man for my camp life. Taking this view of the matter, I feel ashamed of my moral weakness and cowardice in wishing to escape to the safe and blessed sanctuary of home, from which gross evils are shut out. I ought to be a brave soldier and not a cowardly deserter in the moral warfare in which I have enlisted. But spite of these manlier thoughts, the love of

home will keep alive the earnest desire for the speedy coming of the day of discharge.

(To his Wife.)

Bridgeport, Ala., July 10, 1862. The more I see of the condition, and learn of the feeling of the common people, the more apprehensive do I become that we have but just begun the war. There is a wider-spread and deeper-felt hatred of the Northern people at the South than I could without observation have understood or believed. It seems as though nothing short of the depopulation of the country, and its repopulation with men of a different character could bring peace.

July 18, 1862, writes, Many of the officers mean to resign if Colonel Turchin is condemned. But I should be sorry to have men in favor of slavery, as Buell is well known to be, left in entire control by the resignation of men in favor of freedom ; so I shall not resign for that ; but as it is probable that, owing to the scattered condition of the regiment, being set to guard one hundred miles of railroad, I may not be able to render the men any service as chaplain, and then I may resign.

June 10, 1862. Yesterday I made a hum in camp by seizing the money of some gamblers for the benefit of the hospital fund, according to a general order from Colonel Turchin, issued last summer. Since the men were paid off, the gamblers in camp have been fleecing the simple ones. One fellow lost in a few hours ninety dollars, and was frantic to go on. I spoke to the officer in command about it, but whenever he appeared, there was no money to be found. I happened, in passing a tent, to see a game going on and the money on the table; so I just seized hold of it, telling them I must confiscate it to the hospital. One of the gamblers sprang up, and caught hold of me, and tried to take it from me. I told him he had better be quiet, or he would get himself in trouble. I put the money into the hands of Mrs. Turchin, until the colonel returns to camp. Some of the gamblers threatened that if any one attempted to take their money, they would get their head knocked off; but captain told them the best thing for them to do was to keep still, or they would be put under arrest. I supposed, of course, they would not like to be interfered with. But I am commissioned and

paid to look after the moral welfare of the regiment, and I do not mean to be prevented for fear of giving offence. The colored men of the brigade were taken this forenoon under a guard to brigade head-quarters, to give a party of slaveholders a chance to look for runaway slaves; but none were found. By some means the negroes had heard of the plan last night, and those in danger had disappeared. It is thought by some that Colonel Hill, 37th Indiana, has laid himself liable to be cashiered for this attempt to aid slave-catchers.

I have just given my colored boy Andy his first lesson in reading. It is a great pleasure to help a bright fellow like Andy, who seems so able and willing to help himself; he is wide awake, keeps all in order, gets up a good breakfast, dinner, and tea. Yesterday evening I found in my tent a splendid bouquet of roses, pinks, and honeysuckles. I gathered from him that they were from Sally, who had found out where he was, and met him at the well when he went for water. It is a peculiar feeling, camping here in the enemy's country. I look out at the mountains only three or four miles off, long to climb them, but

dare not venture. It seems queer to be surrounded by people who look at you like wolves, to guard your life night and day by unflagging vigilance ; but it is the stern necessity of war, and none but an atheist can believe it will be in vain. We may suffer defeat, but it will be to teach us higher wisdom and to do that justice with which alone is omnipotence and real success.

I am getting ragged, but I patch up and keep as decent as I can. I have made a cot to sleep on, which is very nice. You can hardly believe how entirely comfortable I have learned to make myself in tent. I might lie on the damp ground at night, as I see others do, have no floor to my tent and no fire, get sick, and then a nice long furlough ; but as I feel it my duty to take care of health, I see no prospect of a furlough, and shall probably have to keep fat, healthy, and far from home.

This evening our Bible class was the fullest we have ever had, and all seemed interested ; I feel better satisfied with these meetings than with anything else I am doing, and really think that in this way I am sowing good seed where some of it will be likely to spring up and bear fruit.

I feel sometimes as though I were accomplishing very little and ought to resign. The officers of the regiment are many of them not merely irreligious but immoral men, gamblers, hard drinkers, and profane swearers. My preaching and talking seems to avail nothing, and to get out of the regiment would be to me like getting out of pain ; but then I consider whether without a chaplain some at least would not be worse, and that there is no place under heaven where moral and religious influence is more needed, and I believe I have, with all these adverse influences, inspired the respect of both officers and men.

I have had for a day or two to keep quiet from an attack of the army diarrhœa. I saw in the "Inquirer" a notice that a tea made from the bark of the sweet gum tree is a capital specific. So, as one of these trees makes part of the shade over our tent, I got the bark, and am drinking the tea ; and Mr. George, who has just come by while I am writing in the shade, tells me the effect of this tea in the hospital has been most excellent. I can hardly help feeling guilty for living so idly and comfortably as I do now, but I try to be reconciled by thinking that the Divine Providence

is giving me a holiday whether I will or no, and this is a wonderful plea to be lazy in. The country is full of fine ripe peaches ; thousands of bushels are rotting on the ground, and it is pitiful to see the quantities of blackberries that have dried up. Our boys have built a dam across the creek, and far down I can see them enjoying the cool stream and the cool shade of the trees, as we were before Eve ate the apple. But if these earthly scenes are too earthly, then the blue heavens and white clouds shine through the dancing leaves and open into vistas of celestial beauty, symbols of divine sanctity, infinite majesty, and eternal peace. Ah, wife, these old trees reveal quite as much as they conceal of heaven's glory, and the clear eye, the pure heart, has ever its mission of the infinite beauty and responsive pulsation to the infinite love.

I have found out how to touch the heart and moisten the eye of the soldier. I just begin to describe to him what a paradise home is, — how pure the love cherished there, how kind the hearts, how gentle the tones, how unselfish the deeds, — and then he is soon done for ; if there is any manliness about him, he surrenders. It is

a thing I never do, however, without having to end wiping my own eyes. I sometimes hope, when I am nearest despair, that this camp life, which seems so ruinous to the souls of our men, may end in an utter surfeit of simple indulgence, an everlasting abhorrence and hatred of the vices of men set free from the restraint of home. I am often astonished that men are not sooner sickened by the profanity and obscenity which prevail.

Huntsville, Aug. 19, 1862. A scene. Two ladies in a carriage, with a negro driver, have been to these head-quarters slave-hunting. Had heard that one named Andrew was here. Had a permit from General Rousseau to search the camps. Inquired for the chaplain's tent, and proposed to search that. Chaplain closed the tent, and told them that it belonged to him, and they could not enter or look into it. Ladies held out a paper, which they said was General Rousseau's permit of search. Chaplain told them neither they nor the general could enter his tent for such a purpose. Ladies left in a towering passion, to bring the general in person to catch the negro, punish the chaplain, and so forth. Have not returned yet with him, and I suspect they

find it hard to persuade him to come. Maybe I shall be honored with an invitation to the general's head-quarters, or to appear before his highness Don Carlos Buell. Maybe not; I wait with patience. After the ladies were gone, Andy took a walk; I did not notice which way he went.

Aug. 22, 1862. Yesterday we had another hunt in our camp. The women came again, reinforced by an escort of three cavalry with orders from General Rousseau, they said, to take Andy, dead or alive, to his head-quarters. Andy was not in camp. I was a little distance from my tent, building a foot-bridge, but went and closed my tent-door. Seeing my tent shut up, they suspected Andy was there; so one of the escort came, intending to look in. I bade him stand back, told him he could not enter. He presented what he said was General Rousseau's order. I told him the order was to search the camp, but not my tent; he might go to the length of his order, but in such an infamous business, not an hair's breadth further. He then went back, when one of the women shouted she wished she was a man, she would go into that

tent. I told her it was a pity she was not, so she could try. I believe if they could get Andy into their hands they would kill him. Is it not infamous that, in defiance of the law of Congress, our generals in command will go their utmost length to help to catch and return the slaves of traitors now in the Confederate army?

Oct. 16, 1862. This, dear wife, is my fifty-first birthday, and I had for my dinner a green apple pie, which I ate from the speaker's desk, sitting in the speaker's chair of the Representative's Hall, in the State Capitol of Tennessee. A fiddler was in the Senate Chamber; soldiers were dancing, playing cards, or asleep; women were selling cakes and pies. I could not but remember that here, by vote of traitors, a large majority of the people of Tennessee were bound hand and foot to the Confederacy, and if the hall had not first been filled with vile orators, it would not now be occupied by armed soldiers. Soap and water will remove the filth left by the soldiers, but blood alone will wash out the stain and pollution of treason. After eating my dinner, and then at the desk offering a silent prayer for

the success of our cause and freedom and justice, I went away.

From a camp to the south-east, come, low and soft from the distance, yet clear and distinct, the tones of "Sweet Home" sung by a multitude of manly voices, and doubtless the deep-felt utterance of brave, manly hearts. There is no place like home. But its sanctity and blessedness are dependent upon that Christian civilization and those principles of justice, freedom, and virtue for which we are contending under the flag of our country. So the love of home requires patient endurance of separation from it, for its own sake, and love of the dear ones keeps us away from them while almost dying to be with them.

(*To his Son.*)

Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 6, 1862. As you have enlisted, I doubt not, from honorable motives, I am anxious for you to do the best possible. You will, in the army, see more of coarse vice than you have ever met with before, — profanity, gambling, stealing, lying, drunkenness in camp, than you have ever imagined. You will be beset by temptation to these vices in one way or another,

by example and solicitation every day and almost every hour. Remember the sayings of Pope, —

“ Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen ;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

To keep aloof from these vices, will require more vigilance than the night watch for the enemy, and more courage than to face the rebels in fight. To go through the service and preserve the purity and integrity of your character unimpaired, will be a higher honor, and the proof of greater bravery than other that can be obtained or exhibited. I know a few young men in our regiment who do keep their manliness unimpaired, who neither swear, nor gamble, nor drink liquor, nor indulge in other low vices, and they have the respect and esteem of all. Even those who would like to be kept in countenance by having the force of their example cannot help respecting them. I hope you will do your country the service of setting an example of moral heroism and soldierly good conduct.

(To his Wife.)

Nashville, Tenn., Oct. 5, 1862. I have in possession a little bit of white silk thread which I carry

a large part of the time in my bosom, and often take out and look at, and after bringing it very near my lips put it back. Isn't that que r? What do you suppose it means? Do you give it up? Well, I may as well tell you a little more about it; that little bit of silk thread ties up a tiny lock of hair, and the lock of hair is in a *papier mache* daguerrotype case containing the picture of a mother and daughter. Ah, you will guess the rest, and how, in the absence of the originals, the heart in its yearnings gives way to image worship, and pictures get the kisses love would give the dear ones, made by a year of separation to seem more dear than ever before. It can hardly be helped this image worship, and I have learned to reconcile it with my Unitarianism, and think it no sinful idolatry, but rather akin to true Christian devotion by acceptance of the philosophy of the German D. D., who said that he loved God in his wife and children. I believe that is a kind of piety which comes natural to me, and the exercise of which is quite spontaneous. My wife and children, ah, how large a space they fill in the world of my thoughts and affections! How much of the heaven of mem-

ory and of hope takes the blessedness from them, and has its sanctity and joy bound up with them!

Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 23, 1862. I preached to-day a sermon on the times. I had nearly a dozen of chaplains and Methodist ministers to hear me, and a good audience of soldiers and citizens. My text was, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us, therefore, put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." My sermon was much of it written, but the last part of it unwritten. I believe it gave very great satisfaction, and hope that some truth fell like living seed into good and fruitful soil.

Dec. 6, 1862. I have been hesitating which would be most "pious," — to go and hear Methodist preaching in the chapel about a mile from our camp, or to sit down and write to you. On the whole, I have concluded I would do both; I began as above before meeting, and now after meeting I go on to write to you. I am glad I put away my letter and went to meeting, for I have heard not Methodist distinctively, but Christian preaching on "trust in Providence." I got a far better feast of good things than I expected.

(To his Wife.)

Dec. 21, 1862. How I wish I could be with you to spend Christmas holidays, but it is no use to think of it with the enemy so near and a battle impending. If a battle should be fought, and I should not be on hand to care for the wounded and dying, I should feel guilty. I am busy enough. When I can do no more for the sick, I work for the well. One man comes to me with a new axe and a handle to fit in it. I have made the colonel, the adjutant, the major, and myself each a writing-table, beside ever so many camp-stools and dinner-tables. When we came here, I found a stand and camp-stool among the stuff that I had made in Nashville. I supposed some one had put them on a baggage-wagon for me, and was thankfully carrying them off, but a colored man said he found them and carried them all the way from Nashville, six miles, on his head, so I allowed his claim; then he divided the plunder, giving me the stool. I feel dreadfully at times, saddened, sickened, and disgusted at the doings of war. But bad as it is, the injustice and oppression perpetrated for ages is worse, so if the war be needful to that

justice, mercy, and truth, which is the kingdom of God, we must fight till his kingdom come.

This was the tenor of our chaplain's life in camp, so long as he was spared for the service; sick at heart sometimes at the things he saw about him, longing to get home again, if it were only for a day, to see the wife and children, and especially the little child he had never seen, that was born after he went to the wars, and when the rest of his children had grown to be men and woman. He never did see that little one in this world at all; it was baptized in the room where he lay dead, and the vase that held the baptismal water rested on his coffin; and then, not long after that, the child himself was taken by the angels to the arms of the father who had longed so to see and hold him on this earth. But Mr. Conant's life in the camp, as my readers will notice, was not without fine encouragements and cheerful aspects. The boy Andy who had come to him out of bondage, and was a very handy Andy indeed, — a capital washerman, ironer, and cook, a great hand at making black-berry wine, and many other delectable things, and who always brought his water to camp riding on

horseback, with the tub on his head, — this Andy was an endless interest to him. He taught him to read and write, and what could be got into him beside of the humanities, — entered keenly into his domestic troubles and trials, and brought him along to a good estate.

The officers' wives, too, whenever they were in camp, were great allies and helpers to him; "they are worth more," he says, "than a file of soldiers, in keeping the men in order. He wishes there could be twice as many ladies with them all the time, "though it is no place for a woman of delicate nerves. Yet a strong-minded and pure-hearted woman," he adds, "may pass through it all unharmed. Mrs. Turchin blooms like a fair flower in it. She reminds me very much of Lucy Stone Blackwell, has all the refinement of a lady, with the energy and self-reliance of a man; is able to take charge of herself, carries a nice little revolver and dagger in her belt, and has a dignity of manner and bearing that secures respect from the roughest soldiers."

Sometimes he got a fine chance for a sermon that was not exactly within strict theological lines, as one day when he found the soldiers had

no straw to sleep on, and were getting sick for want of it; while those that should have provided it were slack about their duty. He preached from the text, Exodus fifth chapter, sixteenth verse. "There is no straw given unto thy servants."

He went on, as we have seen, to say in his sermon that in this time, also, it was hard to get along without straw. Sleeping on the bare ground was bringing colds, rheumatism, and consumption among the men, and a man with any one of these ailments could not be a good soldier. This was bad again in a moral sense, because discomfort brought on bad temper, and in a bad temper, the men would say bad things. He told the officers they ought to do all in their power for the comfort and welfare of the men, and the men that they could take better care than they were taking of themselves. They could buy a tick with the money they spent in whiskey, fill it with leaves or corn-husks, and get along, if they had to, without straw. The best help, after all, was self-help. "I want you," he concluded, "to have faith in a good bed, good food, and wholesome drink, and that will help

you to have faith in every other good thing, because the gospel of God's grace to the body prepares the way for his grace to come into the soul. Next day a farmer was found who had some sacks of grain ready for threshing, who would be glad to supply some straw if the soldiers would help to thresh ; it did not take long after that for the men to get all the straw they wanted.

The trouble Mr. Moody made him, as the reader will gather, was very grievous while it lasted. The exquisite illustration he hits on, in one of his letters, in supposing that another doctor without diploma, or any other authority than his own say so, should come into camp and begin to tell the men that their own physician, trained and accredited to his office, was still unfit for it, and that *he* was the man, is right to the point ; but he got over this trouble as he did over every other, did his duty with a full-hearted faithfulness, and won at last the confidence and esteem even of those who had been stirred up against him, and so 1862 drew to a close. This letter will tell how the new year opened.

IN THE HOSPITAL. ON THE BATTLE-FIELD,
NEAR MURFREESBOROUGH, TENN., Jan. 2d, 1863.

DEAR WIFE, — We have been fighting three days nearly on the same ground, and the battle is not yet decided. I suppose you will hear of it, and feel anxious about our safety. I write to say that I am yet unharmed, and that I saw our dear son, Neray, after the severest of the fight, in which his regiment was engaged the day before yesterday, about noon, and he was unhurt, also, though he had been in a hot battle, and, as Col. Marsh said, “had fought like a tiger.” I took a cup of tea with him while the storm of battle was roaring like the seven thunders; his regiment had been so badly broken up and scattered that I do not think they were again brought into the hardest of the fighting, so I hope he is still safe. There was constant skirmishing, and our hospital, being in rather a central position on the battle-field, was a good deal of the time between the two fires. Since I began writing, our skirmishers have been firing at the rebels; but now they have fallen back, and the rebels are about the hospital firing at them. We have over one hundred wounded men in the house, Federal and Confederates together, and both sides try not

to hit the hospital. I worked all night till four o'clock in the morning night before last, bringing in the wounded from the battle-field, and while the ambulance was taking a load, I generally remained out in the woods or fields, building fires for the comfort of the poor fellows who were waiting to be taken in, and also hunting them up. While so employed, I was made a prisoner by a Confederate colonel, and my ambulance and assistants were also captured; but we told them what we were doing, so, after some parley, they concluded to let us all go and keep about our work. Just now, as I wrote, the rebels were in the yard, — now, again, our own men are here, and the house jars and the windows rattle with the discharge of artillery close by us. We are surrounded with a wall of fire, and I can hear the balls sing and the shells burst as I write; but our work of mercy is our protection; we shall be hit only by accident. I need not dwell on this. I have often been impatient because I have had so little to do; but the opportunity to help those in need on this battle-field pays for all delays. You cannot imagine how much I have enjoyed for the last forty-eight

hours in helping friend and foe. When captured, I made some of the Confederates help me to bring a wounded Ohio soldier to a fire, and as we clasped hands beneath him, I told him we would take one brotherly gripe, if we never did again. It was the best right hand of fellowship I ever gave or received. Now I must hasten to my duties, and will write more when more at leisure, the good Lord willing.

Your affectionate husband,

A. H. CONANT.

BRIGADE HOSPITAL, BATTLE-FIELD,
NEAR MURFREESBOROUGH, TENN., Jan. 5th, 1863.

DEAR WIFE, — The storm of battle is at last over, and I have the happiness to inform you that Neray and myself are still unharmed. I wrote you the day before yesterday, while the fight was going on, and we knew not which way the tide of battle would turn. Yesterday afternoon it was found that the Confederate army had returned from Murfreesborough, and at sunset we heard the distant roar of our artillery hurrying up their flying footsteps. I went to-night toward that part of the field where the 19th Regiment were camped to learn their condition, then re-

turned to the hospital by way of the camp of the 74th Illinois, and saw Neray safe and well. Since I wrote you, I have been acting assistant surgeon, nurse, and messenger, and have felt that my opportunities of helping those in need have richly paid for all the delay and discontent of the past. I think I must set down the last night of the old year and the morning of the new, passed in the woods on the battle-field gathering up and bringing in the wounded men, as the grandest and happiest night of my life. I wanted to stay in Nashville and work in the hospital when our army left there, and tried to get a situation, and could not; made up my mind that something else was in store for me, and so it is turned out. I have been permitted to do more and better than I could hope.

Your loving husband.

A. H. CONANT.

AT THE HOSPITAL BATTLE-FIELD,
NEAR MURFREESBOROUGH, TENN. (no date.)

DEAR MOTHER, — Before this I suppose you have received father's letter about his sickness, and are anxious to hear from him; his doctor says that he thinks he is doing very well. I am with

him, and shall stay with him until he is well ; he has a good place and as good care and nursing as I can give him. The doctors and nurses are very kind, and all try to do what they can for him. His disease is inflammation of the lungs, caught from overwork during the battle. I saw him a number of times as the battle went on, and tried to persuade him not to do so much ; but he said he could not bear to see wounded soldiers suffer when he could help them. I am very thankful that I am where I can do him good service. He seems to feel that he had done his duty faithfully to the full extent of his power.

Yours in haste and in love.

NERAY CONANT.

IN HOSPITAL, Jan. 28th, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER, — Father is improving slowly, and is able to sit up in a large rocking-chair, bolstered up with pillows ; this position suits him better than any other. I have a little currant wine that I give him, which seems to help him quite as much as medicine. I hope as soon as he is able to travel that he can get a furlough and come home ; they are sending sick and wounded soldiers home on furlough now ; but

you must not set your heart on his coming, because he does not much expect to get a furlough, and says that by the time he is well enough to go home he will be fit for duty ; but that I *doubt*.

Your loving son and brother,

NERAY CONANT.

P. S. — I have one wounded Confederate in my ward ; he behaves himself very well, and has just as good care and attention as any of our men. He would have frozen to death, but for father's care, on the battle-field ; as it was, he froze his feet badly. Father built him a fire, and gave him two or three blankets to keep him warm until he had time to come and fetch him away.

N. C.

But the end had come, the time of his departure was at hand.

On the 6th he still seemed a little better, but had a feeling that he could not recover, and said to Neray, his loving and tender nurse, " I shall not probably live ; but I have no fear of death. I am ready and willing to go at any time God may call me, and, but for the pain of the separation from you and the dear ones at home, I should

have no wish to live. But the good Father, who watches over us all, will care for and protect you when I am gone."

On the afternoon of the 7th, he had a relapse, though without apparent cause. The doctor said it was a change from which he feared he could not recover, but did all that possibly could be done. Opiates were given him to alleviate the pain; from the effects of these he fell into a stupor, in which he remained until his death, unconscious except when aroused. On Sunday, the 8th, an old friend came to see him. I aroused him, and asked him if he knew who it was; he looked up with one of his peculiarly sweet smiles and said, "Why, yes! that is Mr. Gilbert." These were his last words; he sank back into unconsciousness at a quarter before one o'clock, "and having served his generation he fell on sleep."

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in, the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." "For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day, while we

look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

X.

WHAT WAS SAID AT THE GRAVE-SIDE.

OUR HONORED DUST.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF THE REV. A. H. CONANT, CHAPLAIN OF THE 19TH REGIMENT, ILLINOIS VOLUNTEERS, BY ROBERT COLLYER, FEB. 17, 1863.

“They buried him among the kings, because he had done good both toward God and toward his house.”—2 CHRON. xxiv. 16.

THIS was a noble history and a noble end. It is also a most touching and suggestive summary of the nature and consequences of a good life. The man had done good, both in the nation and in the Church: so, when he died, the nation and the Church joined to honor his dust. They buried him among the kings. It is perhaps twenty-seven hundred years since those Hebrews stood weeping beside all that was left on this earth of the good citizen and servant of God. The frame that held and answered to the bidding of the strong and beautiful soul has long entered into other forms. It is —

“Blown about the desert dust,
And sealed among the iron hills.”

It has risen into grass and flowers, palm-trees, corn, and vines. The sepulchres of the kings are lost or doubtful; the sacred seal is broken, the sacred associations forgotten. “The outward man perisheth; but the inward man is renewed day by day.” Jehoida (known of Jehovah) can never be forgotten. Little children spell his name painfully, and say after it, “He was buried among kings, because he had done good.” Young men read, and are touched with a holier ambition; men in the thick of a good life, and a little disheartened, take some fresh courage. When the people had buried him, and the scribes had recorded his name in the temple-rolls, they left him to his rest. The sepulchre was sealed; the busy life began again. All the men died that had ever known him. Time gnawed the wood, rusted the iron, faded the ink, burnt the parchment, burnt the temple, scattered the nation far and wide. Time could not touch the good name and fame itself. It was sown in the weakness of marble and parchment and poor human memories; it is raised in the power of a great unfad-

ing history, touched with the mystery of a divine inspiration, committed as a most sacred trust to the most trusty races on the globe, translated into all tongues, read in all countries. Mortality is swallowed up of life, "because he had done good both toward God and toward his house."

Now, friends, we meet in some such relation as this to-day, to look for the last time on the face, and to mourn the loss, of as good a man as we have ever known, who has fallen in the first autumn days of his life. We meet in this lonely outpost church, where for so many years the Master, walking among the golden candlesticks, found him always in his place ; and, as he blessed him, said ever, "Because thou hast labored, and hast not fainted." We meet with the father who held his first-born with the ever-wondering, clumsy tenderness of the man, trembling over the sacred trust ; with the dear one who has been to him as his own life for more than six and twenty years ; with the children who have grown up, in the near presence of his love, to the full estate of man and woman ; and with the little babe, the infant of days, that he has never seen, and who will not see *him* now, until, in the good time of God, the voice

shall say, "Behold thy son!" as they both stand near the cross no longer, but the throne. The vision is full of pathetic groupings; the natural impulse is to weep. Death always touches the gathered treasure of tears in some heart. One wept for the vile Roman, whose life was one deep execration. Then how near to the deepest spring of tears we stand to-day! A man, so good, *dead!* Father, mother, wife, children, the church consecrated by his ministry, the fair country town that came up with him out of the wilderness, all sitting in the shadow of death!

And I cannot tell you not to weep. A good man may hide his tears as he hides his most sacred prayers; but a good man will no more try not to weep, in some sorrows, than he will try not to pray in some sorrows. There is a tearless philosophy, as there is a prayerless philosophy; but both alike are far removed from nature and from God. It is surely not unmanly in me to do either this or that after the manliest man that ever stood beside a grave. For tears are often the sweet waters of the nature, turning themselves into blossoms of hope and trust, if we let them flow outward; but, if we keep them im-

prisoned in the heart, turning to a black bitterness and decay. Alas even for Judas, when he finds he cannot weep! I think the recording angel waits for the tears of the vilest, and cannot write down sentence against a broken heart; but tears, falling from good men's eyes for a good man dead, are a sacrament. I think, when the angels, jealous for the sanctities of heaven, see them, they whisper, "Behold, how they loved him! We must make him free of our guild; the orders of the angels are all possible to a man for whom strong-hearted men weep."

And yet, friends, I had not spoken here to-day, if I had no better solace than this possibility of tears to offer you. There must be some other and higher thing than sorrow in such a presence as this. Life is not laid out in squares—to-day so much sorrow, to-morrow so much joy—on its most ordinary levels. How much more, how much more now, may we hope for some great intimations of solemn rapture! That is a wonderful history, my brother, read you, when you study it, as it opens inward to the soul. We stand beside our dead; we believe them dead; and, lo, they are not dead! We cry out piteous-

ly, "Lord, if *thou* hadst been here, my brother had not died." By and by, the Lord answers very quietly, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." We cry, "Lord, it is impossible: he has been dead four days! — four days!" The Lord replies, "Come forth!" and he that was dead comes forth. When the first crushing blow falls, we feel about, bewildered, crying, "My brother is dead!" But we cannot hold out against the gleams of the immortal life: just as he was near to Christ, so surely comes our sense of his blessed resurrection. The poet sings, —

" Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed:
He told it not, or something sealed
The lips of the evangelist."

O poet! wise in the workings of the human heart, why did thy sight fail here? It *is* revealed, — it is an open secret to the Christian, — it is an open secret to-day. Jesus said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And yet, friends, I am not sure that even this is the loftiest reach of this time. Is there not some

better thing reserved for us? I love this insight of the good old Scriptures, that will permit no struggle between the mortal and the immortal life, when this life is once well done; that will not permit even Messiah to raise any other than a young man or a young damsel from the dead; that seem to say to us, "There is one thing sacred, even from the disturbance of what you call miracle; and that is a life over which God has cast the full "Well done!" There is no questioning whether Isaiah or Daniel or Paul or John shall take up again with the deserted tabernacle, and reassume the old habitual life. Let the life be once hid with Christ *in God*, and miracle is powerless against it. There is no debatable border-land, when once the soul shall have put on her new robes, and sings, "I have finished my course." Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection. The scene before me has this look of perfect holiness. My friend impresses me in this way. He has fought a good fight; he has finished his course; he has kept the faith: *henceforth* there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness.

And I say this in the full knowledge of how

earnestly he would plead that I would not say it, if this dust could speak for him, and he were still by our side ; and, if he were still here, I would not say so openly. But when once a good man has gone up to God, I think he instantly assumes a new relation. His life after that is not his own, but a legacy to the world, worth so much. If he could come back, it may be he would say, "Tell the exact truth about me ; tell it out frankly. If I have fought a good fight, and it was right for Paul to say so of himself while he was in the world, it cannot be wrong for you to say so of me when I have gone out of it." I propose, therefore, secondly, to say why we would bury this dust among kings, because he has done good.

I. Our friend's life was full of a good, sweet, home-made, every-day goodness. This is no place to contend over a metaphysical goodness ; and there are reaches in the absolute goodness, as it shines in the face of God, before which our Saviour himself shrank back, and said, "Why callest thou me good ?" I rejoice in the fearful tenderness of the best evangelical teaching about what is to be counted absolutely a good life. It

is far better that we should all feel dissatisfied with the best that we can do, and cry out every day, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfect," than that we should ever say, "God, I thank thee I am not as other men." But there is a certain homely goodness of the common life, that we all understand and honor, even if a man has no such lofty feelings. I mean the goodness that lies in always telling the truth; in always dealing fairly and honestly; in being ready to do a good turn or two, or ten or twenty, for the same man, looking for nothing again; in being trusty as a neighbor and friend, whichever way you are tried; in giving and forgiving; doing a fair day's work for a fair day's wages; in being so pure in word and deed that, if a petty slander is set afloat, men shall never believe it possible you can have started it; or if a sin is found out, and not the sinner, men shall never whisper, "You may have done it." This, friends, is the common, natural measure of goodness for the common, daily life of a man. These things are the square foundations upon which you must build the tower on which to plant your loftiest standard of goodness. It is the broad, honest

goodness about which all fair-minded men agree, whenever they do anything as real as eating bread. Take any other goodness without this ; then take this without that ; put them before a common jury, and it will decide the case in a moment. Where this goodness is not found, open-eyed men do not seek for any other. Friends, this is a sacred place and a solemn time. It is said of an old nation that they held back from bestowing the highest honors on their dead for a season, so that, if any man had an accusation to bring against the memory, he should be heard ; and, if it were proven, the honor should not be given. I stand by the dust of our friend to-day. Shall we bury him among kings because he has done good ? He has gone in and out before you twenty-one years ; you have known him intimately. He must have had his errors. I declare to you *I* do not know them ; and we ministers are commonly kept well informed about the weak side of our brethren. I believe the man does not live who can tarnish his name by one small spot of real dishonor. I call you to witness this day, — you, his neighbors, who have known him so long and so well, — I stand here

your spokesman, and declare his public, open, common life in Geneva and Rockford untarnished. We bury him among kings.

II. Then, I say, secondly, he was a good Christian. I assume to-day no peculiar sanctity for Unitarianism over any other faith; but in the presence of this dust, I bait not one comma from the highest claim. What men can attain to by faith in God and in his revelation, I claim for my friend. The question of a wholesome personal goodness, that finds expression in kindly offices and loyalties, is open to all. The neighborhood is the court in which that claim of our life is tried. But it is not so with this. The mystical, spiritual relation of the soul to God can only be fully understood by the soul itself, and by those to whom the soul opens in her moments of rare confidence. "No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son *will* reveal him." I count that the most hideous of all bigotries that would question the Christianity of any man who shall do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God. The soul has an absolute right to say where she will seek her home in beliefs and churches. There is no general hu-

man way to test a belief, as it enters into the life of a man, except by some such method as you test a fruit or a flower. Is the belief high, pure, and good, can only be answered by finding whether the life is high, pure, and good. What is sour or bitter may be good for God, and in some way for men too ; but we decide by instinct for the goodness of what is pure, sweet, and grateful, over that which is not so. We prefer the perfume of roses and the taste of the perfect apple to the sting of the nettle and the acidity of the crab. I stand here to-day, and say, that, by all the tests that can be applied by communities of men, our friend was a good Christian. Every good Christian grace had its own place in his life. He held fast by all that he believed to be essential in Christian beliefs, and grew by their power and inspiration into the high Christian soul, whom to know was to love, and to know more was to love more. No man could commune with him of the high things of the soul, and go away more in the dark, or with his trust in God shaken, or with his conception of God degraded, or with lower ideas of Christ, or with less of "the hate of hate, and love of love." No man came into the

near communion of the soul with him, — the revelation of the Father by the Son, — who did not feel that while others could soar higher, and stay longer, in the pure, cold, almost breathless regions of religious speculation, no Christian soul could help you more than this could, reminding you by its direct and simple realizations of those little ones, whose angels do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven. He made you feel a pleasant, sunny atmosphere all about you, while other and greater men would have sent you away from the very same discussions with a feeling of dread. I count this among the best things in a Christian man. This atmosphere of sweet kindly airs and rains and sunshine, where the very clouds fold you like a home, and the night is full of rest, — such, in a singular measure, was the Christian life of our friend. He was good both toward God and toward his house.

III. But there is a final estimate and affirmation that outreaches all this; and that, in our friend, was the crown and glory of his life. He was not only a good man in the common goodness of life, and a good Christian spirit, keeping his soul sacredly open to God, but he was true to the

great trust and duty of his life. He was a faithful minister of the gospel, “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” This story of the good minister would be deeply interesting if I could recite it from first to last, — how, when he was a young man, holding quite another belief from that which afterward became the inspiration and fire of his life, he happened into William Clarke’s store in Chicago (I say happened, because I see only the hither side of Providence); how there he found some little tracts, that touched him in some higher way than he had known before; how he caught from them new glimpses of God and the Saviour and the Sanctifier, of life and death, and earth and heaven and hell; then how resolute he was to follow these hints of cloud by day, and fire by night, until finally the waters were parted for him, and he stood in the promised land; and then how he went to Cambridge, because he would not lay hasty hands on the ark of God, and fought his way to what was to equip him for the ministry, — poor, brave, cheerful, untiring; how generous friends gave him lifts in secret, delicate ways, as is the use of your ever-dear, and now more than ever-dear, New England

toward such earnest, struggling men ; finally, how he came back here to the West while this region was so new, and planted himself where we stand to-day. From 1842 to 1857, he made your town the centre of an influence that can only be known in the great, full time of God. Steadily, year after year, as he found time, he travelled in all directions through these regions, with his heart full of the great gospel of God, and his hands full of such printed statements of it as can be made. I saw him first in the spring of 1859. He came into my office, and, holding out his hand, said, " I am Conant, of Rockford." I had never heard the name before, but I liked the honest, good face, the moment I saw it. The clear eyes, the open brow, the kindly voice, — they were very sweet to me, for I was a stranger. From that time we were as brothers. I loved him ever more, the more I knew him. In his home, in his study, in the affairs of his church, in all things about which brothers consult, we consulted. Friends, I *know* the loyalty to God and man, the hope and trust and strong endeavor, that found expression through this dust.

He saw early and clearly the shadow of the

fearful struggle between freedom and despotism, whose convulsions are shaking the world to-day. He elected openly whom he would serve: he elected to serve God and the slave; to fight for freedom and right. In this endeavor he never gave place, — no, not for an hour; he was steady through evil report and good report, through honor and dishonor. When despotism decided for cannon, he went into the camp as cheerfully as he ever went into the pulpit; he was the same tireless disciple of Christ in the battle as he had ever been in the church. I had many letters from him as the work went on. He had sore trouble for a time with a fanatic from Chicago, who could not see how a man could be a Christian preacher if he did not roar like a bull of Bashan. This man tried to turn the hearts of his men against him, and partly succeeded for a short time. He poured out his heart to me in a long letter, which I should read to you if I did not know that my friend sees all this now “with other, holier eyes than ours.”

I counselled — what I knew he was ready for — that he should fall back upon the great immovable first things that always conquer in the

long run (tenderness, goodness, faithful, solid hospital work), before which Trinity and Unity are shadows to a rough soldier. I never had the result made clear until yesterday; then it came in a voice from his regiment, in a paper written by a soldier in the hospital, and given to his son as he brought away the body. I will read you the main parts: "Many hearts will be made sad, when they hear that our chaplain has gone to his rest; many a fearless soldier's eye will grow wet, when he hears that the brave and noble chaplain, who dared the dangers of Stone River, who never turned aside for bullet or shell, but, where balls flew thick and fast, sought out the wounded, and administered to their wants, is dead. Never, while I live, can I forget him, as I saw him on the field, with his red flag suspended on a ramrod, marching fearlessly to the relief of the suffering; appearing to the wounded soldier like a ministering angel. I can never forget the night of the 31st December, when he labored all the long night seeking the wounded. I can hear his voice now, loud and clear, in the still air, crying, 'Any wounded here that need help?' And so he labored to the end, taking no rest. When

we said, ‘Chaplain, you must rest, or you will die,’ he always replied, ‘I cannot rest, boys, while you suffer : if I die, I will die helping you.’ He sank down at last under his labors, and he is dead. Let all weepers console themselves ; what earth has lost, heaven has gained.” Friends, these are the words of a man in the ranks. This is the testimony of one who saw our friend on the battle-field ; who witnessed the culminant glory of his life ; who saw him steady amid the fires and thunders of the day of God. O noble dust ! O beloved and faithful man ! O true knight ! we will bury thee among our kings ; with Winthrop and Putman and Ellsworth and a great multitude which no man can number, which have gone up out of this great tribulation. And, in the time to come, if men have still the old insight for what is good and great in human life ; when this dust shall have risen into the infinite forms of another life ; when the marble you place over the grave is dust, and the tongue in which I write this record is dubious or forgotten,—this one flash stricken out by this soldier, “I saw him on the battle-field marching fearlessly to the relief of the wounded,

with his red flag suspended on a ramrod ;” “ I heard his voice ring clear through all the long night, ‘ Any wounded here ? ’ ” “ I saw him fall down at last and die, because he could not rest while we suffered,” — this history is immortal.

When the noble Greek prepared for his sorest battle, he put on his most beautiful armor ; for he said, “ If I fall in this battle, the cause deserves that I shall die so ; and if we are victorious, I desire so to meet victory.” Our friend is not dead ; he has put on his most beautiful armor, and met victory. I cannot, I cannot mourn him among the dead. Death has no dominion. We bury the dust among our kings : the man stands forever in the ranks of the immortals. The cause is consecrated afresh to you and me to-day. We must all live better after this, or we shall not stand with him among the sons of God. He has taken a mighty spring ; he has gone into a great place. Let us go back to our homes with deeper confidence in our good cause because so good a man has died for it ; and let us never fear that what is consecrated by the blood of such martyrs can fail finally of its

purpose. We *must* believe with a more solid power in the ultimate triumph of our nation in the vindication of its trust, because he also “ever liveth to make intercession for us.”



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